The January

BRAVO BELGIUM!

ROYAL

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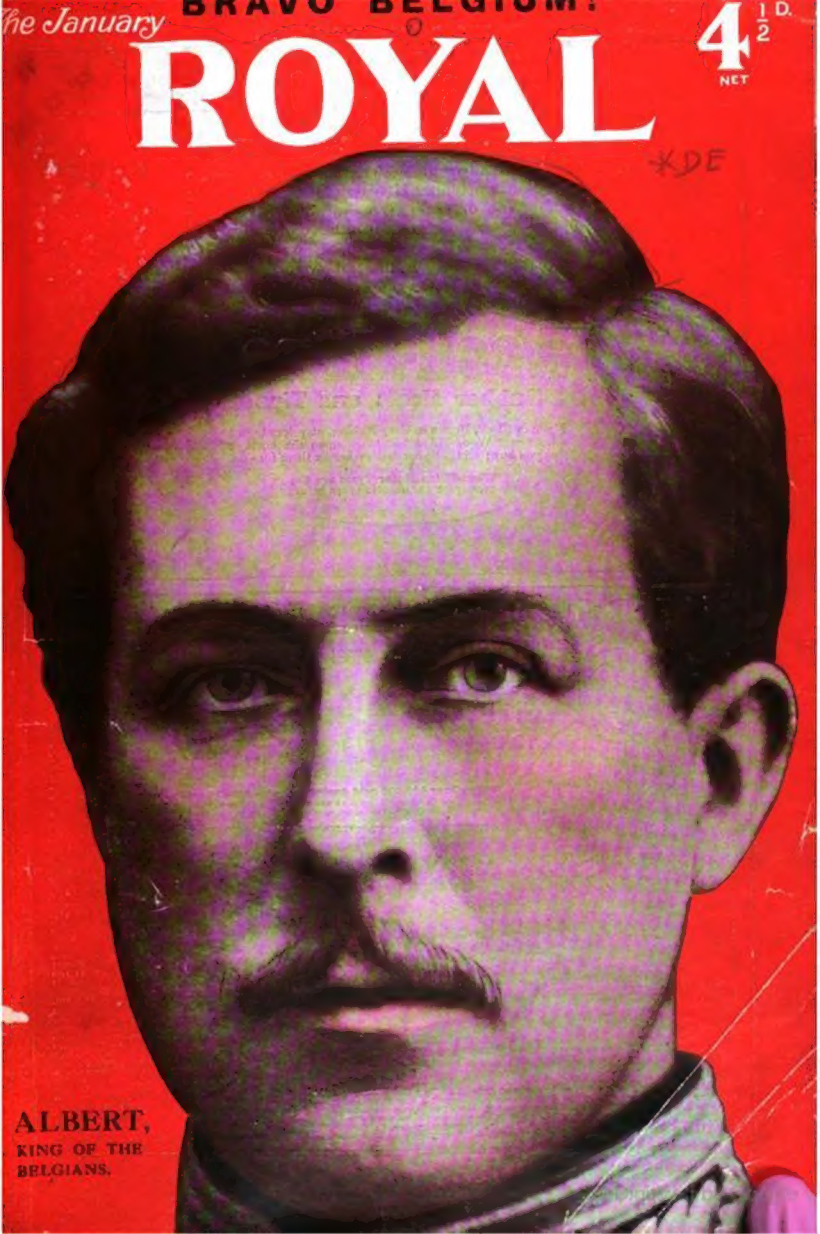

ALBERT,
KING OF THE
BELGIANS.

THE ROYAL MAGAZINE.

PUBLISHED MONTHLY.

CONTENTS FOR JANUARY, 1915.

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N.B.—All the names and characters mentioned in the stories in THE ROYAL MAGAZINE are purely imaginary.

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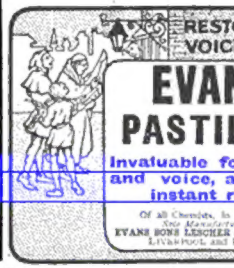

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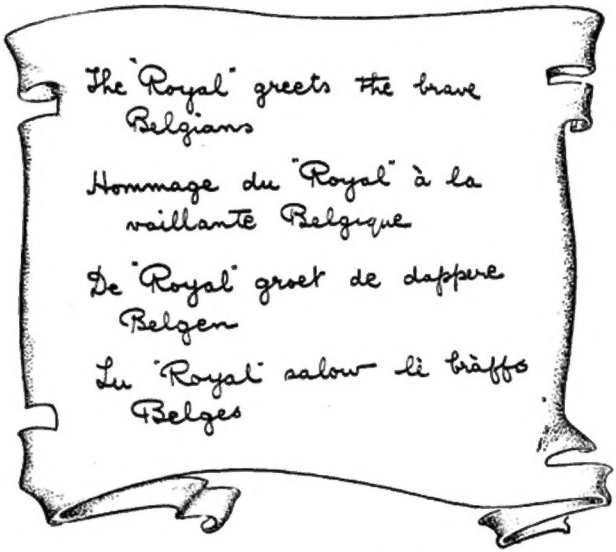
The "Royal" greets the brave Belgians
Hommage du "Royal" à la vaillante Belgique
De "Royal" groet de dappere Belgen
Lu "Royal" salow li bràffo Belges

For the benefit of British readers who are not linguists it may be explained that the above is a greeting to our Belgian allies in English, French, Flemish, and Walloon reading from the top downwards.—Ed. R.M.

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The King of Belgium, whose unfailing courage and splendid example have done so much to inspire bravery and confidence in his gallant troops.

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Photo *News paper Illustrations.*

The Queen of the Belgians visiting a base hospital; by her sympathy with the wounded soldiers she has endeared herself to the whole nation.

BRAVO, BELGIUM!

By Camille Roussel

(Chef de la Redaction de *L'Indépendance Belge*).

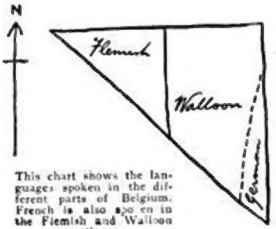
Although the English-speaking world is full of admiration for Belgium, yet this admiration partakes largely of the nature of love at first sight—we admire without knowing much about the Belgians beyond their military virtues. This article, by a distinguished writer on the staff of the famous Belgian newspaper *L'Indépendance Belge*, affords a graphic pen-picture of his country and countrymen.

To most Englishmen with whom I have spoken, Belgium means Ostend. But Ostend, a town largely managed, in the season, at any rate, by German hotel-keepers for Germans, is not very typical of the real Belgium. The coast towns in the Ostend district are far too cosmopolitan to give English visitors any idea of the country itself.

The British and the Belgians have many common characteristics. The United Kingdom includes a number of races with ideals and national features of their own; your people are industrious, businesslike, and intent upon commerce; all these things are equally true of us.

Perhaps you do not know that there are no fewer than four languages spoken in Belgium to-day, and that the inhabitants come of two distinct races, who form a strong contrast to one another, and between whom prior to the war there was no great love lost! But I assure you that this is so.

Roughly speaking, the shape of Belgium is triangular. If we draw a triangle, and, further, draw a line from the north side to the south, so:



This chart shows the languages spoken in the different parts of Belgium. French is also spoken in the Flemish and Walloon sections.

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we get, more or less, a racial and language chart of the country. The smaller division, on the western side, represents the Flemings, who speak Flemish; the larger, eastern section, represents the Walloons, who speak Walloon. In both divisions French is the language of polite society. The little area cut off by the dotted line I have supposed to denote Luxemburg, which you must not confuse with the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg, and part of Liège—the province of Liège—where German is spoken. So here we have the two races, the Flemings and Walloons, and the four languages—Flemish, Walloon, French, and German, just as you have the English, Welsh, Scottish, and Irish, with their respective languages.

Photo Topical Press Agency.

The Germans have no respect for ancient buildings, and the Courts of Justice at Malines were badly damaged during the bombardment.—

There is a vast difference between the Flemings and the Walloons in every respect. To put it briefly, the Flemings approximate more to the German, and the Walloons to the French type. The Flemings are big, bulky, sober and staid, ruddy complexioned, and solid. They produce painters of the Rubens genre—painters who love to depict the big, buxom women that Rubens painted.

The Walloons, on the other hand, are a smaller race, frequently dark, and with the sallow French complexion. They are more intelligent than the Flemings; they seize upon the situation much more rapidly; their gestures and movements are quicker, and they are more animated.

You can realise now what I said earlier, that the Flemings and the Walloons are not exactly to one another what David was to Jonathan. Indeed, before the war it was a problem of the Government whether the Walloon regiments of the army would not fight the Flemish in the event of hostilities. But, just as before the war your country rang with the cry: "Army *versus* People," and just as the Army has been dying for the People ever since the war, so the Flemings

Farrington Photo Co.

The women of Belgium bravely took upon their shoulders many of the tasks usually done by men, and it was no uncommon sight to see a woman busily reaping while Belgian soldiers and men of the Civil Guard dug trenches near by.

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—This photograph, taken after the bombardment, shows how the Germans treated Malines.

and the Walloons have been fighting like lions side by side against the common enemy.

Naturally, the language question raises certain difficulties in our national life, particularly with regard to education. However, a sort of compromise has been arranged, by which in the primary schools instruction is given in Flemish and French in the Flemish districts, and in Walloon and French in the Walloon part of the country.

Like you, we are an industrial and manufacturing people, largely because, as in your case, coal and iron occur in our country. We share with you a fine reputation in engineering matters, examples of which you can see every day in England in the famous Metallurgique automobiles. I am of the impression that on the whole we work harder than you do; there is no Saturday half-holiday with us, and we do not—at any rate, the mass of the people do not—devote many hours to sport. Sunday is with us the great day for amusements, and then the theatres and concert halls are crowded, for the Belgians are great lovers of music and the drama.

Among the better classes there is a great vogue for English sports and English ways. For instance, it is the national custom to dine in the middle of the day and make the evening meal an eight o'clock supper. The more fashionable now adopt the English way of lunching at midday and dining at seven or seven-thirty. Football, tennis, and hockey are the fashionable sports, and racing has become exceedingly popular. Most English people know the beautiful racecourse and polo ground at Ostend.

We are exceedingly proud of Brussels, our beautiful capital, which is famous as a smaller edition of Paris, and in some respects, we like to think, more Parisian than Paris herself. Certainly there is no society in the world more elegant than that to

After the German attack on Tirlemont, the road to Brussels was thronged with fugitives seeking refuge from the enemy in the capital. Among them were many priests and Red Cross Volunteers.

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The type of fort created by General Brialmont proved a formidable obstacle to the Germans at Liége. The illustration shows, in section, a connecting or supporting battery between one fort and another. The figures indicate (1) a fort seen from the side, (2) an attacking party carrying boards for bridging wire entanglements——

Brussels. You must realise, to appreciate it rightly, the situation of our capital. It is the great half-way house, the Clapham Junction of the Continent. The great international expresses run through Brussels from everywhere to anywhere. Consequently there is no more cosmopolitan city; the Bruxellois are able to see and appreciate that which is best in every country and adopt it themselves if they think fit.

I hope I have been able to give you a correct impression so far of the Belgian people—sober, industrious, level-headed, possessing, perhaps, more *esprit* to the east than to the west. Our magnificent old towns, now, alas! to a great extent damaged irreparably by the fury of war, it is impossible to describe worthily. Only those who have visited them can appreciate the venerable atmosphere of one of our cathedral cities—that extraordinary peace and sense of timelessness which is theirs alone.

Perhaps at this point I may turn, with pardonable pride, to describe the Belgian Army.

Up to the year 1909 it was recruited by means of conscription, and as I have noticed since my stay in your country that not one Englishman in a hundred appears to know what conscription means, always confusing it with universal service, perhaps I may be allowed to explain.

Conscription is based on the system of *tirage au sort*—the drawing of lots. For instance, if from a male population of 100 you wish to recruit five men, the 100 draw lots, just as sometimes in England you toss as to who shall pay for drinks, and the losers have to serve in the army. This system is open to abuses, because if a wealthy man is drawn for service he finds a substitute, whom he pays to take his place, and as that was considered undemocratic it was decreed in 1909 that the eldest son of every family should serve.

That, of course, was scrupulously fair, but unfortunately it did not give us enough men, and I may tell you we who live on the edge of the earthquake have been expecting this war for years. The last thing the late King Leopold said to the then Prime Minister, who came to take farewell of the dying monarch, was: "You will have war in 1911" —and 1911, if you remember, was the year of the Agadir incident, when at one period your fleet disappeared into the North Sea, and no one would have risked a farthing on the chance of peace.

Consequently, in 1913, we adopted the principle of universal service, by which every man physically fit is called upon to serve on reaching the age of twenty-one. This gives us more men than we need for our peace establishment, and so certain exemptions are made when the number required has been obtained. For instance, the second and third sons of a family which has given one son already to the colours are let off, and so on.

At the moment, practically every young Belgian of military age not with the colours has volunteered. The achievements of the Belgian troops are a matter of history. But I should like to say one thing; never have I seen men who created such an impression of grim, irresistible strength as the Germans. They are simply amazing, and their kit and

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"By courtesy of the "Illust rated War News"

—(3) wire entanglements, (4) a *fougasse* or land-mine, which is a hole half full of stones placed over a charge of powder, which is electrically fired, (5) wire entanglements, (6) infantry position, (7) battery of field guns, (8) flanking battery of Maxims, (9) field-howitzers or siege guns, (10) siege pieces or howitzers, (11) communication trench or railway.

equipment have been designed with equally amazing forethought and method down to the last trivial detail.

Here is just one example:

You know that a soldier's belt is retained at the back by two buttons or hooks, one at either side. Well, the German soldier's belt is retained by four, so that if a couple break away he still has two left to keep his belt in place. That is German organisation.

There is no doubt that the personal influence of King Albert has had a great deal to do with the achievements of our troops. His career, you must understand, has been that of a soldier from the beginning, because, like King George, he was never considered likely to succeed to the throne. The younger of Leopold II.'s nephews, only the tragic death of the elder, Prince Baudouin, in 1891, caused him to become heir apparent, and accordingly his life had been spent far from the intrigues of courts, and his were the simple, direct military virtues. Long before he led them in the field his men adored him.

King Albert is a big, fair-haired, boyish man, a fine mountaineer, and a keen soldier. He is frankly ill at ease on ceremonial occasions; like all out-of-door men, he finds them exceedingly irksome. He is in appearance considerably younger than his thirty-nine years, and this appearance of youth is intensified by the hatred of ceremony I have mentioned. You will see this soldier King fidgeting like a schoolboy in the council chamber, but he does not fidget in the face of the enemy.

Here are two true war anecdotes of King Albert which typify the man.

On one occasion during the war he dashed into a town in his car to discover certain officers, whose age made them appreciate the comforts of life, drinking champagne in a café.

The King entered the café, picked up a knife, and with his own hand cut the badges of rank from their sleeves. Then he pointed to the spot whence, far away, came the noise of battle.

"You had better get back to the firing line," he said. "I, your King, have just come from the trenches, and yet you sit here drinking champagne!"

You will no doubt remember that, recently, the German Emperor sent a message to King Albert informing him that unless he ceased resistance the Emperor would consider him his personal enemy.

The King's reply was brief and conclusive:

"I am already," he said, "in the trenches with my troops," and indeed he was, having picked up the rifle of a wounded soldier, firing at the enemy like a simple private.

So far, I have spoken of Belgium as she was before the war. But what of Belgium to-day? The best picture I can give is afforded by this extract from a proclamation by King Albert:

Soldiers, our towns are burnt, our homes annihilated, there is mourning upon our beloved Fatherland. But still crueller things will befall our compatriots if you do not deliver them from the

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invader. It is an imperative duty for you. You can deliver our Fatherland with the help of our brave Allies.

To-day the traveller in Belgium drives through miles of graveyards, the tombstones of which are simply stakes, sometimes bearing a helmet or a tunic in memory of the man interred beneath. The only inhabitants of many once flourishing towns are the very old, who, with the strange obstinacy—or is it instinct?—of the aged, refuse to leave. The few remaining peasants shelter in roofless houses, and their faces are drawn and stamped deeply by the miseries they have gone through. They possess no food, no tools or implements to work with, and no seed to sow. They depend for existence on relief contributed by foreign generosity.

It is difficult to give any idea of the ruin which the Germans have brought upon our country. Louvain alone, taking into consideration the damage to the university, cathedral, factories, houses, and public monuments, has endured a loss of £7,400,000. At the time of writing, the Germans were trying to induce the inhabitants to return to Antwerp, but not a soul could be seen in the streets. In all the regions of Antwerp, Lierre, Aershot, and Louvain there is nothing but destruction, and those pathetic mounds of earth with here and there a rough wooden cross. At the station of Louvain the name has been altered from the original "Louvain—Leuven" to the Germanised form of "Löwen."

In Brussels to-day—the middle of November—soup is being distributed to no fewer than 250,000 persons, and in some cases families are joining forces and living in common for the sake of economy. Practically all business is at a complete standstill.

The Germans attempt to persuade the remaining inhabitants to take up the thread of existence, and others to return from Holland. But there are too many red stories of German atrocities passing from mouth to mouth for their wishes to be fulfilled. I will quote but two, which are authentic.

In a certain town occupied by the Germans, the wife of a prominent citizen lay in bed, and beside her a two-days-old baby. German soldiers dragged this man into the street, bound his hands behind his back and held him.

"Now," they said, "you will see your house flare up."

Incendiary missiles, which are a speciality of the German Army always employed for the purpose, were flung into the house, and before this unfortunate man's eyes his home, his wife, and his child were consumed. Then they placed him against a wall and shot him.

The second I take from "The Case for Belgium in the Present War," sent out by the Belgian delegates to the United States.

Sport & General.

The Belgian dogs play an important rôle in the transport of ammunition and light guns: they are part of a Belgian section under marching orders.

Alberic Rolin, volunteer in the Artillery of the 20th Brigade, 103rd Battery, certifies he saw between Malines and Hofstade, on Tuesday, 25th of August, in the afternoon, the body of a woman of about 40 with a baby of five years pinned to the ground by six bayonets.

(Signed) ROLIN.

Is it any wonder that my countrymen refuse to venture back?

And now, *mes amis*, I have told you what we were, and told you what has been done to us. If you ask, in your national catch phrase, "Are we downhearted?" I reply "No! a thousand times no!" We have confidence in our Allies, and, above all, in the ultimate justice of things, and we look forward to a yet finer and more glorious Belgium of the future, achieved by perseverance and sacrifice.

MAP SHOWING THE RELATIVE SIZES OF ENGLAND AND BELGIUM.

A good idea of the size of Belgium in relation to England and Wales may be gathered from the above map. The United Kingdom covers an area of 120,051 square miles, while that of Belgium is 11,400 square miles, or, roughly, one-eleventh of ours. The population of Belgium was, in proportion, far in excess of that of the United Kingdom, working out at 648 persons to the square mile instead of 374 to our own country.

With the black portion of the map as Belgium it is quite easy to reconstruct the battles in England, with the Germans pouring in from the North Sea, to be met as they marched westward by the oncoming force from the south, as they were in France. Reinforcements from Ireland can be imagined coming at Liverpool and Bristol. It will be seen that the position of Liverpool corresponds to that of Ostend, while Mons, Namur, Ghent, and Bruges occupy, roughly, the position of Wolverhampton, Leicester, Macclesfield, and Runcorn.

NOBBY — THE INTERPRETER

By Edgar Wallace.

If you have never heard of Nobby Clark, now is your time to make his acquaintance; if he is an old friend you will hail this new series with joy, for Mr. Edgar Wallace's hero is the one inimitable Tommy Atkins, and his exploits at the front are most entertaining.

"In this world," said Private Smith in his most philosophical frame of mind, "nothin' helps a man to overcome what I might term the difficulties of life so much as a good memory an' a knowledge of languages—ahem!"

Smithy and I met in the buffet at the Gare de Lyons. A wounded officer now convalescent was returning from Lyons, and Smithy was to meet him.

"Troops comin' out to France have, naturally enough, a desire to *mallum* the *bat*.*

"Lots of chaps gave it out, before the regiment left England, that what they didn't know about the French language might, so to speak, be safely left to the General Staff.

"Nobby Clark had a book sent to him by his brother—he bought it cheap in Farringdon Road—called 'Easy Conversations Fransaze,' an' when it come out in orders that officers an' men acquainted with French should hand their names in to the orderly room, Nobby up an' proclaimed himself one of the finest French scholars of the age.

"The adjutant called Nobby out on parade.

"'I see you've put your name in as an interpreter, Clark?' he sez.

"'Yes, sir,' sez Nobby.

"'Do you speak French?' sez the adjutant.

"'We, we,' sez Nobby.

"'Avec facilimong?' sez the officer.

"'Nong, nong, mong Capitong,' sez Nobby.

"'I asked you if you spoke it with facility,' sez the adjutant.

"'No, mong Capitong,' sez Nobby, 'with a book.'

"'Not so much of the "mong Capitong,"' sez the officer.

"Anyway, they didn't take Nobby.

"Well, mobilisation began, an' Nobby, being bitten with the idea of walkin' about in an officer's uniform interpretin', hit on a plan.

"He had an uncle in London, an' every afternoon when he wasn't for duty Nobby went up to town to his uncle's, and, changing into civilian kit, went to Dr. Shlielsteimer's Celebrated School of Languages, an' took a couple of hours' lessons.

"'No good my goin' in uniform,' he told me, 'there's always a lot of girls at them places, an' I don't want to be, so to speak, conspicuous. Girls always run after me,' he sez modest.

"'So should I if I was a girl," I sez.

"'Would you, Smithy?' he asks quite pleased. 'Why?'

"'Because,' I sez, 'if I was follerin' you about I shouldn't see your ugly mug,' I sez.

* Tommyesque Hindoostani, meaning to "speak" the "language."

"Anyway for a couple of weeks he toiled an' moiled, an' he gave me a good deal of information about the pen of his aunt an' the books of his father's brother that I'd never had before.

"'I'm making good progress,' he sez very enthusiastic. 'The teacher is a feller named Meyerheim—he's a naturalised Austrian, an' he don't spare any pains.'

"Before the lessons was finished, Meyerheim had gone—had to leave sudden for Austria to see the aunt of his mother, takin' two pens, a pencil, an' the book of Thomas. At least, that's what Nobby said, an' as he told me first in French and then in English, I suppose he'd got all the facts.

"Anyway, Meyerheim was gone, an' Nobby took the last of his lessons from another chap.

"'Twelve bob it cost me, but it's worth every penny,' sez Nobby. 'I can talk French like—well, you wait till we get to France.'

"Well, we mobilised at Aldershot, an' off we hopped.

"I must admit that Nobby made himself understood remarkably well. When we got to Boulogne Nobby went up to the first French soldier he saw, an' sez, 'Polly voo Francay?' an' the French soldier looked a bit staggered, but ses 'We, we.' So there couldn't have been much wrong with his accent.

"And when it came to goin' round the shops buyin' things, nobody understood the language so well as Nobby. If he wanted two apples he'd hold up two fingers, an' say, 'Sieve voo play?' An' when the lady told him how much it was, he'd give her a franc and count the change very careful

"'How do you know how much she sez?' I asked him once.

"'I don't,' sez Nobby, 'until I've counted the change.'

"Lots o' people who didn't believe that Nobby could speak French at first altered their opinions. We used to be hard up for newspapers, the only ones comin' our way being the papers we got up from Paris, an' the troops used to bring 'em in an' sit round in a circle whilst Nobby translated 'em. Some of the papers was good, an' some was not so good. The one Nobby liked best was a paper called *La Vie Parisien*. A rare paper for war news that was, an' it gave pictures of patriotic French ladies who'd given all their clothes to the poor. Some people used to say that there was no war news in *La Vie Parisien*, but that only shows what a fat lot they knew about it.

"Nobby would turn the leaves over very solemn, turnin' his head away so that he couldn't see the pictures, an' by an' bye he'd say:

"'Hullo—here's a bit.'

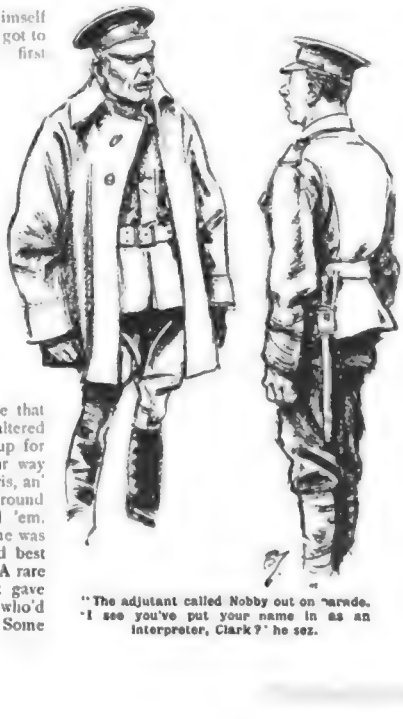
It is rumoured that another million German recruits are drillin' like mad.

"'What's Drillin' Like Mad in French?' says Spud Murphy, the only suspicious feller in the whole battalion.

"Drillong au balmè," says Nobby, quick as lightnin', an' went on readin'.

"There he'd sit for hours translatin' the news. I don't suppose there's a paper in the world with the information of *La Vie Parisien*.

'It is reported,' reads Nobby, 'that the citizens of Hornsey are gettin' up a testimonial to that gallant hero, Private Spud Murphy, of 1st Anchesters, who is to be engraved on vellum an' bound.'



"The adjutant called Nobby out on parade. 'I see you've put your name in as an interpreter, Clark?' he sez.

"'Is that there?' asks Spud incredulously.

"'Do you doubt me word?' sez Nobby.

"'It's very likely,' sez Spud highly gratified. 'My family has lived in Hornsey for years, an' me father has driven the corporation water-cart since 1887—do they say what the testimonial is for?'

"'Yes,' sez Nobby, 'it's owin' to the decrease in crime since you was called up.'

"When the advance started an' we moved up to Mons to that celebrated battle, Nobby found lots of opportunity for speakin' the language. People brought us flowers an' grub, an' the way Nobby kept sayin' 'Mercy, mercy,' was wonderful to hear. What's more, all these French ladies and gentlemen understood him. Two days before the battle we was billeted in the little town of X——. There was four of us chaps billeted in a labourer's cottage, an' the way those people put themselves out for us was wonderful. That night, after we'd had a reg'lar officers' mess dinner, Nobby was sent for. The adjutant was standin' in the middle of the street talkin' to a French soldier.

"'Clark,' sez the adjutant, 'you speak French, I understand.'

"'In a sense—yes, sir,' sez Nobby.

"'Well, you can look after this man—one s billeted in your house.'

"So Nobby pointed to the house with his thumb, an' the soldier understandin' the language, went along with him.

"It was a bit of a joke on the adjutant's part, for this chap spoke English. He'd come up from Charleroi, he said, an' had got cut off from his lot by a party of Uhlans.

"A nice affable feller he was, an' spoke as good English as me an' Nobby.

"'Do you speak French?' he sez to Nobby.

"'Ung petty pair,' sez Nobby, modest.

"'You'll pick it up,' sez the chap. 'I speak English because I was a waiter in London for years.'

"An' then he began to talk about the war an' how he'd left his old folks an' his wife in Amiens, an' how he hated the Germans.

"'When are you chaps movin' to Mons?' he sez, sudden.

"'To-morrow,' sez Nobby.

"As a matter of fact, nobody knew when we was movin' or where, but Nobby is a sort of feller that never likes people to think that he don't know everything

"We used to be hard up for newspapers . . . an the troops used to bring 'em in an' sit round in a circle while Nobby translated 'em." (Page 217, col. 1.)

Up came Nobby, and behind him was the adjutant an' a file of the guard. 'Take that man,' sez the adjutant, an' they seized the French soldier.

"'Where's your artillery now?' sez the French soldier.

"'Down the road,' sez Nobby, an' this French feller went on askin' all sorts of questions. He told us his name was De Boosong, or a name that sounded like that.

"Nobby went out soon after, an' me an' the other two chaps in the billet strolled out after a bit, talkin' about the troops an' where they was, an' how many big guns we had. We was lookin' at an ambulance waggon when up came Nobby, and behind him was the adjutant an' a file of the guard.

"'Take that man,' sez the adjutant, an' they seized the French soldier.

"'Your name is Meyerheim, an' you are a spy,' sez the adjutant.

"We made a rapid search of him an' found rough plans with the positions of all the troops from Boulogne to X—— marked in ink. Then we took him back to the cottage.

"The Colonel came in, an' another officer, an' they tried him at the table where our supper had been laid.

"'You'll be shot at daybreak,' sez the Colonel.

"The spy looked round at Nobby.

"'I remember you now,' he sez, 'you wore civilian clothes when you come to my class—ah, well!'—he shrugged his shoulders an' walked out between the guard.

"'How did you recognise him, Clark?' sez the adjutant.

"Nobby looked thoughtful at the ceilin'.

"'By his bad French accent, sir,' he sez,

The ANGEL OF ANTWERP

From the Narrative of Marie Somers as told to Arthur Applin.

Some glorious deeds have been done by the women of Belgium, who are as heroic as their men-folk. Here is a thrilling story of a Belgian nurse's heroism—a genuine human document transcribed from real life.

Marie Somers was a nurse in one of the hospitals at Antwerp. In her ward were four English soldiers, all dangerously wounded; they were under her special care.

Day by day the sounds of battle had grown nearer. At last shells began to shriek over the city and drop in the streets.

But her four English "Tommies" could not be moved. Doctors and nurses hurried away imploring her to follow them. But she shook her head. Her place was with her patients, the men who had risked their lives for Belgium. That night, alone in the hospital save for the English soldiers, while she was snatching a brief rest in her bedroom above the ward, a shell burst on the hospital, crashing through the roof, smashing a hole in the ceiling of Marie's room, turning her bed upside down, and burying her under the *débris*.

By a miracle she escaped with a few bruises. She hurried below clad only in her night-dress, and lifting first one, then the other of the wounded men on her back, she carried all four down the long flight of stairs to the basement.

All night long the shelling of the town continued. The hospital seemed a favourite mark of the Prussian gunners. It became untenable. Fire broke out.

Once again Marie picked up her patients, and carried them on her back one by one out of the crumbling, burning building across the street to a house that had escaped the shells.

At last an improvised motor ambulance passed the house—nothing more or less than a Cricklewood omnibus! Marie stopped it; the wounded men were lifted in, and away it went. Marie, having seen her patients on the road to safety, returned to the doomed town. She still had a duty to perform. In her little home, on the outskirts, she had left her mother and her son.

She reached the house to find it in flames. The German troops were already entering Antwerp. She hid in the cellar of a house near by, but four officers found her there and dragging her out, roughly questioned her. She refused to answer their questions. She was a Belgian and loyal to her country.

They struck her, and one, seizing a bayonet, drove her down into the cellar again, thrusting the steel deep into her side. Then they gagged and bound her. There was a water-tap in the cellar; this they turned on and, telling her she would be left to drown, they went away. For twelve hours she struggled to free herself. The water rose higher until it reached her knees.

Eventually she got her hands free, crawled through the water, climbed on to a ledge and reached the window. She managed to gain the street without being seen.

She walked and ran through the ruined outskirts of the town until she reached a railway line. She followed it blindly. A train passed her, crawling slowly along, filled with troops. With an almost superhuman effort she managed to mount the footboard, fling open a door of one of the compartments and drop inside.

She found herself in a horse-box. Here she lay until the train stopped at Bruges. An English N.C.O. found her here. On learning her story he gave her all the money he had in his pocket, a pair of boots, and his great coat, and told her how to reach Ostend by train, where she would find a boat for England.

But poor Marie, dazed and stupefied, with only five shillings in the world, started out to walk to Calais.

She is now in —— Hospital in London, slowly recovering, unable to move from her bed, forced to lie on her back day and night, still suffering agonies from the bayonet wound and her injured legs and feet. But she smiles bravely and is *bien content*.

Lifting first one, then the other of the wounded men on her back, she carried all four down the long flight of stairs to the basement.

A NEW SERIES OF THRILLING SPY STORIES.

SECRET SERVICE

No. I.—THE MAN IN THE GREY CAR.

By Louis Tracy.

This and the succeeding stories in this series, each complete in itself, describe amazing exploits of a trusted secret service agent during the present war. Few people outside the inner circle of the authorities realise how widespread and subtle are the methods of German espionage. These stories will do much to open the eyes of the general public, written as they are by one who is intimately acquainted with the devious workings of the enemy.

Sir Digby Grant, Baronet, Lord-Lieutenant of the County of Yorkshire,* leant back in his library chair, balanced gold-rimmed *pince-nez* on a dignified nose, and focussed the card which a man-servant had just brought.

"'Mr. Charles F. Furneaux, Criminal Investigation Department, New Scotland Yard,'" he read aloud. "Sure he wants to see *me*, Tomlinson?"

Tomlinson was quite sure.

"Show him in, then," sighed Sir Digby.

Almost testily, he pushed away a pile of documents.

"It seems to me, Faber," he said, peering over his glasses at an industrious secretary, "that this chap has made a mistake. His business must be with the Chief Constable, not the Lord-Lieutenant."

"The Scotland Yard men are very sharp fellows, Sir Digby," smiled the secretary. "I think you will find that Mr. Furneaux knows his business thoroughly."

The library door opened, and the footman announced: "Mr. Furneaux."

Already inclined to be snappy, the much-worried baronet nearly forgot his urbane manners when his critical glance fell on a dapper little man attired in a blue serge suit, light waistcoat, brown boots, and peaked cap, a man whose wizened features, remarkably bright black eyes, and jaunty air suggested that he was a comedian by profession. The detectives of Sir Digby's acquaintance were large-size policemen in plain clothes. For the moment he thought he was being humbugged.

"Well, sir," he grunted, "and what can I do for you?"

For answer, the visitor turned quickly, and said to Tomlinson, standing by the open door:

"Thank you. You may go."

The footman went, closing the door rather loudly.

"Am I addressing Sir Digby Grant?" continued the newcomer, wheeling round with disconcerting celerity.

"You are," said the Lord-Lieutenant.

Furneaux's gaze dwelt for an instant on the secretary.

"Who is this gentleman?"

"My secretary. But——"

"As my business is highly confidential and of national importance, you must decide, Sir Digby, whether or not your secretary shall be made aware of it."

Faber half rose, whereupon the Lord-Lieutenant flushed angrily.

* For the purposes of these stories, Yorkshire is regarded as having only one Lord-Lieutenant. It really possesses three, one for each Riding.

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"Sit down, Faber!" he cried. "What nonsense! You know everything concerning my affairs, both public and private."

"Good!" said Furneaux unconcernedly, with a half glance at Faber, which the latter interpreted as one of relief. "As I come direct from the Home Secretary, I must first ascertain to whom I am speaking. The Government have determined to establish a Secret Service, and have detailed me for duty between the Tees and the Humber. I am instructed, in the first instance, to consult the Lord-Lieutenant of Yorkshire, who may be able to assist in a matter of vital importance.

"I want the co-operation of a young man of intelligence and independent means, who can give his time to the service of the State. He should own a powerful car, know every inch of the county, have mixed in its social life, be absolutely trustworthy and discreet, and prepared to take considerable personal risk. If you know of such a man, kindly put me in touch with him without a moment's delay. If you cannot name him offhand, you can at least tell me the likeliest quarter in which to apply. Here are my credentials."

During the little man's brief explanation Sir Digby Grant had undergone a peculiar mental development. He was incapable of understanding it, because it consisted of that subtle process which Americans describe as being "put just where he belonged." At any rate, being a gentleman and man of affairs, he recognised that he had nearly blundered rather badly.

"Won't you sit down, Mr. Furneaux?" he said, pointing to a chair, and immediately busying himself with the papers the detective had handed to him.

Furneaux sat down. Sir Digby read a letter bearing the Home Office address and that day's date. He read it twice, and his face grew graver with each perusal. Then he folded the document carefully. He hardly glanced at two accompanying letters.

"I have the utmost confidence in Mr. Faber, my secretary," he half stammered. "Don't you think——"

"I am sure that Mr. Faber's help will be invaluable," agreed Furneaux.

When the secretary read the letter, his expression also bore witness to the vital import of its contents. And that might well be so. It had been written by the Home Secretary himself, and ran:

The bearer of this note, Mr. Charles F. Furneaux, a detective-inspector attached to the Criminal Investigation Department, should be supported by the whole power of the State. His mission is to suppress secret communication between Great Britain and enemy countries. His Majesty's Government have reason to believe that events affecting the safety of the nation are known in Berlin within a few hours of their occurrence here. This leakage must be stopped. Consideration must be given to the end, not to the means of attaining it, which are left entirely to the discretion of Mr. Furneaux and the agent whom he will appoint, aided by your advice and unstinted assistance. A hundred errors will not weigh against one success.

Mr. Faber passed back the note.

"That should have been done eight days ago," he commented. He spoke quietly, but there was a strange note of bitterness in his voice.

"At any rate, it will be done thoroughly now," said Furneaux, thus nipping in the bud a vacuous statement by the perplexed baronet that "surely nothing of the kind was possible in Yorkshire." Happily, Sir Digby suppressed that banality.

"I'm puzzled to suggest the right sort of man," he said, after a pause. "What do *you* think, Faber?"

"I don't know anyone better qualified than myself in some respects," was the unexpected reply. "Unfortunately, I lack three essentials — leisure, money, and a car."

"You?" gasped his employer.

Faber thrust back his chair and stood up. He was a tall, good-looking young fellow, about twenty-four years of age, with the lithe figure of an athlete. His dark eyes were blazing now, and his square chin and strong jaws were set stubbornly.

"Yes, I. However, this is the last straw!" he glowered. "Last week, Sir Digby, you refused me a commission in a county battalion, though I assured you that my brother, who has just left Oxford, could pick up the threads of my work here in a couple of hours. Poor chap! His lameness disqualifies him for active service. Now you must either take him or find a substitute. I leave you to-morrow."

"God bless my soul!" cried Sir Digby.

"I'm sorry, sir," said Faber firmly. "I simply cannot remain in my present position while other fellows are out in the open. Take my advice. Let me telegraph for Jack. He can arrive to-night. I'll put him in the way of things, and you will hardly know I've gone. I'm off."

"Off where?"

"To the War Office. My O.T.C. training at Rugby and the University qualifies me for a commission."

Furneaux's high-pitched, thin voice broke in at just the right moment.

"You own more than one first-class car, Sir Digby?" he squeaked.

"Yes," and the angry blue eyes gleamed at him over the rims of the *pince-nez*.

"And Mr. Faber can drive any of them?"

"Yes."

"You are reputed very wealthy?"

"What the——"

Furneaux pressed the tips of his fingers together and smirked like a beatified curate.

"Mr. Faber strikes me as the right man for my job. He has brains, which are hardly needed for the carving of fat Prussians. Why not equip him? As I drove through your beautiful park, situated slap in the centre of your county, I thought it would make an admirable base. We can't scour the roads all day and all night, so we shall return here occasionally. Give him your best car, Sir Digby, put a hundred pounds in his pocket, and let him wire for brother Jack. Before the end of September you'll be glad you did it."

Sir Digby had yet to learn to what lengths Furneaux's cool effrontery could go. But no man, be he rich as Cræsus, can attain the Lord-Lieutenancy of England's premier county without the additional endowment of certain fine qualities of heart and brain. The baronet exhibited some of these now. He rose, unlocked a safe which was built into the library wall, and took from a drawer a bundle of notes.

"Here are your hundred pounds, Faber," he said, thumbing the packet. "Take the Rolls-Royce. It's in perfect trim. When do you wish to make a start, Mr. Furneaux?"

"As soon as you can spare Mr. Faber."

"To-day?"

"If possible, Sir Digby."

"We can clear off the bulk of the litter by tea-time, eh, Faber? I'll attend to your brother when he arrives."

"I hardly know how to thank you, I——"

"Sir, I understand why the Home Secretary sent me to you so confidently," put in Furneaux. "But give me one moment. You have a telephone. The County Chief Constable will recognise your voice. Kindly introduce me."

Soon Furneaux was talking and listening. Evidently he arranged to call on the Chief Constable that night.

Meanwhile Sir Digby had rung for Tomlinson, and requested the presence of Miss Evelyn. Furneaux was still occupied when a very pretty girl entered. She was in tennis costume, and carried a racket.

"What luck!" she cried. "I thought Mr. Faber would be awfully busy till——"

Her voice trailed away into silence under her father's warning gesture; she looked curiously from him to the secretary and the small, spry stranger at the telephone, but concealed her bewilderment when told to provide Mr. Furneaux with a room and entertain him until tea-time.

In reality the detective entertained her. She voted him "a dear little man," and was greatly mystified when Tomlinson contrived to inform her, while Furneaux was sending away the car which brought him from York, that this unexpected guest was a Scotland Yard detective.

Sir Digby and Faber came out to tea; they regretted an unforeseen delay; would Mr. Furneaux mind if he were detained a couple of hours? Mr. Furneaux offered no objections.

"Finish your day's work, gentlemen," he said cheerily. "Sufficient for the morrow are to-night's uncertainties."

Evelyn Grant's first inkling of what was actually occurring came when Faber appeared in the hall with a portmanteau, and her father promptly quashed her manifest desire for enlightenment. She did contrive, however, to whisper to Faber before the Rolls-Royce started:

"What's up, Bobbie?"

"Don't ask me now, Evelyn," he replied. "Tell you everything later," and he threw the engine into gear.

"Ph-ew!" whistled Furneaux, as the car sped down the avenue into the after-glow of a perfect day."

"What are you whistling about?" inquired Faber instantly.

"Your name is Robert, I take it?" said the detective.

"Yes. Robert Lincoln Faber."

"Ah! Mine's Charles François Furneaux. Can we, by any chance, pass through the village of Nuttonby on our way to headquarters?"

"It only means a *détour* of a few miles."

"Quiet little place?"

"Very. A real moorland hamlet."

"Lying high?"

"On a shoulder of the highest plateau in the North Riding."

"Know anybody there name of Brown, living at the Grange?"

"I know the Grange. It has been empty for years."

"It is occupied now. Let's make a call."

"You have a reason, I suppose?"

"Colonel Fox tells me that Mr. Brown, of the Grange, Nuttonby, is one among a few for whose comings and goings he cannot fully account. This may be a wild-goose chase. We shall have many such. We can take nothing for granted. Every suspicious circumstance must be probed into, every unknown man and woman brought to account. We are at war, Mr. Faber, at war with a thoroughly unscrupulous enemy, whose agents will be found in the most unlikely places."

"We turn off here, then," and the car swung into a lane.

When the car emerged into an open upland the detective asked his companion if he spoke German.

"Yes," said Faber. "I was at Heidelberg before I went to Oxford."

"If you hear me break out into Teutonic profanity you can help a bit?"

"I'll play second fiddle, at any rate," laughed Faber.

"Good boy. I was inclined to bet on you from the first minute. If it isn't a rude question—why are you sticking to your secretaryship?"

"Sir Digby controls big commercial interests, and I may find an opening that way. I am interested in politics, too; one gets chances when mixed up in county affairs."

"Nice girl, Miss Evelyn. Are there any sons?"

"No."

"Ph-ew!" whistled Furneaux again.

Faber turned to look at him, but the detective cried out in alarm:

"Take care! I object strongly to cutting corners too fine at twenty-five miles an hour."

For some reason Faber checked the question on his lips. A few hundred yards further on they entered the York and Scarborough main road, only to leave it as speedily. Then they took a switch-back track, which nevertheless mounted steadily, and the undulating black line of a moorland became even more clearly silhouetted against the evening sky.

"Nuttonby is up there," said Faber, nodding straight ahead. "The Grange is an isolated place on the very edge of the heather. It is suitable only as a shooting-box. I can hardly believe it is tenanted, because the shooting is in other hands."

"Is there a police constable in the village?"

"I believe so."

"Will he recognise you?"

"Probably. These men get to know one at agricultural shows and at the Petty Sessions. I often go to court with Sir Digby."

"We'll pull up at his cottage. He may give us a few pointers about Mr. Brown."

It was almost dark when they entered the village, a secluded nest of humanity to which the dread tidings of war had as yet hardly penetrated. A bent old man directed them to the policeman's residence. Fortunately, as it proved, the officer was at home, and hailed Faber by name, so there was no difficulty about getting him to talk.

Yes, a Mr. Brown had resided at the Grange since the early spring. That is to say, he put some furniture in the place and went away. He had actually dwelt there since the middle of July. P.-C. Baker thought the gentleman must be there for the shooting, but there was no establishment, only a couple of men, who never appeared in the village.

"Mr. Brown goes to York three nights a week," he added, "and comes home very late, sometimes at two or three in the morning."

"How do you know he goes to York?" inquired Furneaux.

"Because he asked me the way one evening, sir."

"Is he English?"

"Scotch, I think, sir. He talks with a kind of a burr."

"You reported his presence here in response to a circular from Colonel Fox?"

"Yes, sir. You see, he's the only gentleman in these parts whom we can't exactly account for. He may pass any minute. He hasn't missed a Wednesday in the last three weeks."

Neither Furneaux nor Faber had alighted, but the detective now skipped out hurriedly.

"Is there a farm-yard handy where we can put this car?" he said.

"Oh, yes, sir. How about the yard of the inn across the road?"

"The very place. Step lively, Mr. Faber."

When the car was hidden, Furneaux glanced up and down the almost deserted village street.

"Three people make a crowd here," he said. "If we stand at the window of your house, and put out the lamp, we can see into the roadway without being seen."

The precaution was barely taken before the hum of a high-power, fast-driven automobile was heard from the direction of the moor. Soon it flitted past—a long, low, grey car, carrying brilliant headlights.

There were two men in the front seat.

"That's Mr. Brown driving," whispered the policeman, unconsciously sinking his voice as if he might be overheard. "I've never seen anybody with him before."

"A six-cylinder Fiat," mused Furneaux aloud. "York must be twenty-five miles from here?"

"All that, sir, and more."

"Are you free for an hour or so?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, shove on your helmet and cape, and come with us. Light that lamp again, and I'll show you something."

When P.-C. Baker read documents from Scotland Yard and the Home Office enjoining all Government officials to assist Mr. C. F. Furneaux in every possible way he was awe-stricken.

"You carry an automatic pistol?" inquired the detective.

"Yes, sir."

"Bring it, and your truncheon and handcuffs as well. They may prove useful."

Furneaux himself produced an electric torch and two pistols from his bag, which, with Faber's, was in the rear section of the car. He handed one of the weapons to Faber, and warned Baker not to say or do anything without being bidden; then they set off for the Grange, which lay a mile away, and well above the village. The constable tapped Faber on the shoulder when they neared the entrance gate, which led straight into a dense grove of firs. Furneaux ran to open it. The gate was padlocked, with a heavy chain!

"*Ach, was!*" grunted Furneaux, lapsing into German. "What shall we do now. We can't get in!"

"*Du lieber Himmel!*" growled Faber, taking the cue.

"And those doubly-dammed English police may be here at any moment," went on Furneaux loudly, still speaking German. "What's to be done? Drive on, and put out the lights, while I climb this never-to-be-forgotten gate."

There came a rustle in the undergrowth on one side of the gloomy drive.

"*Wer da?*" demanded a gruff voice, unmistakably surprised.

Furneaux, though hardly prepared for this dramatic verification of a sheer guess, cried instantly:

"*Schafskopf!* Open the gate. The police are after us! They may have missed the others, but they are coming this way."

"But——"

"*Ach, Gott!* Would you ruin everything? We must give the signal. The English are crossing the Channel to-night."

"A moment, *freiherr*. I must telephone."

"Telephone? From here?"

"Yes, to the house, or the car cannot pass."

"But open the gate first. Our lights may be seen."

"True. Be careful not to go far up the avenue."

By this time the speaker, a stoutly-built man, had come into view, and was unlocking the chain. Furneaux backed, apparently to get out of the way. He touched Baker's sleeve, and pulled it slightly. The policeman, who naturally had not understood a word that was said, was quite alive to the fact that a German stood behind the gate. He jumped out before Faber had the engine in gear. The gate swung inward, and the car crept in cautiously. Furneaux went with it, and straightway flung himself on the guard, shrieking the while:

"Cuff him, Baker!"

During a very few seconds there was a fierce struggle; when it ended, the German was tightly handcuffed and lying on the broad of his back.

Furneaux flashed the torch into the man's face, and pressed the muzzle of the automatic between his eyes.

"You can save your life, Hans, by telling the truth," he said quietly. "Which is it to be, speak or die? Choose quickly."

"I'll speak," muttered the captive.

"Very well. Get up! Where is the telephone?"

"Among the trees, to the right."

"Where does it lead to?"

"The house, of course."

"How many men are in the place now?"

"One."

"Where has that car gone?"

"I don't know. Herr—my master never tells me where he is going."

"What's his name?"

"Herr Brown."

"Lying is a peculiarly dangerous matter for you at this moment," said the detective. "But I'll find out Brown's real name soon enough. Why, when you thought we were fellow spies, did you want to telephone to the house?"

"To save you from being killed."

"What would kill us?"

"An electrical arrangement which fires a bomb in the avenue."

"Send the message now. And remember,

The gate swung inward, and the car crept in cautiously. Furneaux went with it, and straightway flung himself on the guard, shrieking the while, "Cuff him Baker!"

a bullet crashes into your brain if you try any tricks."

The prisoner, with apparent willingness, led the way to the tree, raised his manacled hands and took a field telephone receiver from the dense branches. He pressed a button, and an answering click came.

"That you, Georg?" he said.

Presumably, the man at the other end of the wire replied "*Ja!*"

"It is I, Fritz. Signal! We are——"

He got no farther. The instrument was torn from his grasp and, incidentally, disconnected. Furneaux raised the pistol.

"I warned you," he almost hissed.

"Shoot!" cried the spy. "I'm no coward! Your bones will lie with mine!"

The pistol was lowered.

"Bring the rascal back to the car," said the detective to Baker. "I can't murder him!"

"He may be more useful to us alive than dead," put in Faber coolly. "Such faithful dunderheads invariably do the wrong thing. Shall we push along towards the house?"

"I think not. This fellow blurted out the truth by accident. The road is protected."

"We can go slowly. Our lights are strong. It is barely half-a-mile. If extra care is called for, one of us can walk ahead."

"Beg pardon, sir—" began Baker. He was interrupted by a vivid flash above the trees. A rocket soared skyward and burst into a shower of white stars. A second rocket spread a galaxy of red stars. Furneaux was annoyed. Fritz had misled him effectually.

"What were you about to say?" he snapped at the policeman.

"There's a shooting drive about two hundred yards to the right, sir. If the straight road isn't safe, I think the car can reach the other one."

"How?"

"By passing between the wood and the fence."

"We'll try it. They can't have bombs planted everywhere."

"Good gracious, sir! Bombs in a place like this!"

Baker, of course, had heard nothing previously to suggest the possible existence of an infernal machine. To him it was inconceivable that Yorkshire should be in a state of war.

They bundled Fritz into the rear seat with the policeman, and Furneaux acted as pioneer, after locking the gate exactly as he had found it. The car forced its way through bracken and brambles, which latter gave Faber a tremor for his tyres. Again a white glare illumined the countryside, to be succeeded by a softer red radiance. Thenceforth, at intervals of a minute, ten times did the signal rockets mount a thousand feet.

Furneaux was consumed with impatience, but speedy progress proved absolutely impossible, even when the more open shooting drive was reached. The brilliant lamps etched weird black and white effects in the depths of the wood, startled rabbits scurried from under his feet, and pheasants flew from their perches with loud cluckings.

Once his keen eyes detected a shining strand, thin as a spider's web, stretched knee-high across the path. He stooped and cut it with scissors, and the severed ends whirled away with the slight hiss of a snake. Never yet has snake stung with deadlier effect than that wire was capable of. Now, almost unknowingly, the detective had drawn its fangs.

He heard a smothered curse from Fritz.

"Ah! That touches you, does it?" he cackled. "We'll examine that arrangement by daylight. Meanwhile, you must be gagged!"

And gagged Fritz was, though he strove to bury his strong teeth in Furneaux's fingers.

Near the top of the drive they encountered and cut another wire. Then, as Baker estimated they were approaching the line of the house, the car was halted and the lamps extinguished. Much to his disgust Faber was told off to remain in charge of car and prisoner. But he said nothing, and the others crept away into the darkness. After a wait that seemed almost interminable he heard the steady throb of a motor. So still was the night that at a distance of half-a-mile he could distinguish the change of gear when it stopped at the gate and started again. Then, unquestionably, it speeded up the avenue.

Never was man so tempted to secure Fritz with a spare strap and indulge in a bit of scouting on his own behalf. But he sat tight. Had not such military training as he had received steadily inculcated that the first duty of a soldier is obedience?

Once more did the car stop and start. Then a crash of musketry came, as it seemed, from the heart of the wood, and a curious rending noise followed. Yet he did not move, though heart throbbed and brain was a-fire!

At last he had his reward. An electric torch glowed fitfully among the pines and shrubs, and Furneaux's shrill voice reached him.

"You all right, Mr. Faber?"

"Yes."

The detective drew near. His face was ivory white when illumined by the torch, and bore a weird semblance to a Japanese mask. But his speech was quite under control.

"Sorry we can't keep our appointment with the Chief Constable," he said. "We shall be busy here for hours. Georg, having sent his recall signals, started out to look for Fritz with a lantern, so he was easy. But I was interested in those wire contrivances; when I found one close to the house I duplicated it with some strong packing thread and a couple of sticks.

"One can see wire by night with a good lamp, but the devil himself couldn't see black thread. So one master spy is shot, and his car riddled with bullets, besides being smashed when it ran off the road. Two live spies and one dead one—not a bad bag for the evening of the Twelfth! Now we'll examine documents, and prepare a few more sporting fixtures. Bring the car along. The house is just round the corner."

When the car drew up in front of the heavy portico the air was laden with the acrid scent of gunpowder. A healthy rocket leaves as much fume as a 4·7 gun.

A lamp was burning in the hall. Through the open door Faber saw a man lying inside, trussed like a fowl.

"That's Georg," said Furneaux. "We'll make him a bit more comfortable, before we pick the remains of Mr. Brown out of the Fiat."

Georg was "made more comfortable" by being handcuffed to Fritz. Both men were stolid, lumpy fellows of the true German *bauer* type. Georg had fired the "recall" signal when he ought to have told of danger. Thus, aided by Furneaux's curiosity as to the real meaning of the thin wires stretched across the various roadways through the wood, he brought about his master's death.

The two were bundled into a cellar, locked in with a supply of food, and taken to the nearest cell at P.-C. Baker's leisure next day. They now inhabit one of his Majesty's prisons.

Mr. Brown, who had been shot four times clean through the body, was carried to an outhouse, searched for papers, and left there.

"Nasty, messy job," squeaked Furneaux, who nevertheless examined the dead man's clothes thoroughly. "Don't either of you smoke?"

P.-C. Baker produced a pipe. Faber offered the detective a cigarette-case.

"I'll smell one," said Furneaux, and, suiting the action to the word, he sniffed the tobacco with relish.

"Why not light it?"

"I value my brains too highly to atrophy them with nicotine," was the tart response.

"There'll be a rare stir about this affair when the newspapers get hold of it, sir," commented Baker, puffing his pipe and evidently enjoying himself immensely. "Who would ever have thought of such doings on the moor edge?"

"How will the newspapers get hold of it, as you say?" demanded Furneaux.

"At the inquest, sir."

"Pish! An ordinary motor accident! We three, the coroner, a doctor, the Chief Constable, and the Home Secretary are practically the only people who will ever know what really happened.

"Now we'll dine," continued Furneaux, when the outhouse door was locked. "I glanced into a larder. The Grange is provisioned and armed for a siege. What an ass that Georg was! He might have beaten us if he had remained hidden."

"Don't you think I had a chance of escaping?" smiled Faber.

"A mighty poor one. You played the hardest part in to-night's little drama. What a surprise it will be for Miss Evelyn Grant when you tell her how you have passed your first evening on active service!"

Faber flushed in the darkness. This most unorthodox little detective had already pierced the carefully-guarded secret of a hopeless love.

He sighed. War brought about strange happenings; there could be no stranger outcome of the German attack on society than that a poor secretary should wed the daughter of a great county magnate like Sir Digby Grant!

The three dined well on cold boiled ham, Frankfurter sausage, and Rhenish wine. Then, leaving Baker on guard in a darkened hall, Faber and Furneaux examined the house. It was an arsenal of dynamite, nitro-glycerine, tools, modern rifles, and automatic pistols. In a small upstairs room, fitted as a bureau, they found maps and note-books. A large-scale map of Yorkshire, pinned to a table, bore crosses and circles in red ink. Furneaux's eyes glistened at sight of it.

"This should help some, as they say in America," he chirped. "We shall examine those signs at leisure." He broke off suddenly, his restless glance having caught a name in a note-book. "Steinbaum!" he chortled. "Steinbaum, the master spy! What luck if he should be Mr. Brown. The scoundrel has worried us for years, often in England, but mostly acting from Hamburg. If Steinbaum is stretched dead in that stable, we've destroyed the best wireless installation the Kaiser has at command."

It dawned on Faber that the little detective talked at random when his mind was most active. The finding of that map, and the crammed notebook had stirred an alert intelligence into a positive frenzy of inductive reasoning.

They divided the night into three watches of three hours. Each took one; the others slept in their clothes.

The night passed without other event. About eight in the morning, having breakfasted, Faber and the detective departed, promising to call at Nuttonby and relieve Mrs. Baker's anxiety as to her husband's whereabouts. Baker had orders to mount guard till assistance came, and shoot any stranger who did not surrender instantly.

In the first place, however, they examined the man-traps, one of which had killed Steinbaum, whose identity was definitely established by letters and memoranda. Ten rifles were tied to trees on each side of the road where it was crossed by wires; any object pressing against a wire brought a fusillade of twenty bullets over a breast-high area covering several feet horizontally.

"Simple and effective," was Furneaux's verdict.

The disabled Fiat was hurriedly overhauled, and found capable of repair. Furneaux laughed.

"If the authorities were reasonable," he said, "they would present you with the car and the £500 in notes and gold which I extracted from Steinbaum's pockets. But the Treasury is the State miser. It will collar the lot."

Wherein Furneaux erred. The Fiat was made over to Faber, to be restored at his own expense!

(Another thrilling story of the Secret Service will appear next month, which will shed still further light on the German spy system.)

THE LAW-BREAKERS.

Priscilla rode without a light
A quarter after nine,
A wrathful policeman barred her way,
Spoke darkly of a fine,
Until Priscilla smiled at him:
"The wind blew out the flame."
But, to teach her to be careful,
He took Priscilla's name.

Priscilla's smile was wondrous sweet,
And made him long for more,
And many a time he found himself
Beside her cottage door.
Until, at last, he stole her heart
And calmly kept the same,
So, to teach him to be careful,
Well—Priscilla took his name.

B. B.

PILLARS of PANTOMIME

By Margaret Chute.

Christmas would not be Christmas without the pantomime, and the following article tells you all about old favourites and talented new comers, who are going to keep the pantomime flag flying merrily this year.

"Business as Usual" is the motto of theatrical managers; and though the list of Christmas productions may not be quite so long as usual, every big provincial city will have at least one pantomime—and in many cases more than one—while London boasts four in the West End, and many in the suburbs.

At Drury Lane Mr. Arthur Collins is reviving the popular pantomime which has filled that theatre for two seasons past. *The Sleeping Beauty Re-Beautified* is its title this winter, and there are several interesting changes in the cast, though Mr. George Graves and Mr. Will Evans will be found in their accustomed *rôles*.

Photo J. Barrie & Sons, Leeds.

Miss Clarice Mayne will play Dick Whittington at the Pantomime, at *matinées* only. The pantomime will have original music by James W. Tate, otherwise known as "Flat."

A favourite in crinoline for her part in the change to Mrs. Jarrocks, Wallis, who will play the Prince in *The Sleeping Beauty Re-Beautified* at Drury Lane.

It is good news to hear that Miss Clarice Mayne will appear in pantomime this year in London. She is to play Dick in *Dick Whittington* at the London Palladium, at *matinées* only. This production is to be a real old-fashioned pantomime with lots of fun and pretty

faces, and is being arranged specially for ladies and children.

Miss Mayne will sing some entirely new songs, which are being written and composed for this pantomime by Mr. Clifford Harris and Mr. James W. Tate, Miss Mayne's partner on the music halls, otherwise known as "That."

For Drury Lane Mr. Arthur Collins has engaged Mr. Bertram Wallis, the popular musical comedy star, to play the Prince. Mr. Wallis regards his new venture with great interest; it will be his first appearance in pantomime, and he considers it a fine experience in every way. Playgoers who remember him in his many sucesses—*King of Cadonia*, *The Balkan Princess*, *The Count of Luxembourg*, to name a few—will be interested to see him in a novel *rôle*.

There is to be a new Sleeping Beauty in Miss Ferne Rogers, a young American star who made her bow to an English audience this autumn in *By Jingo, If We Do!* at the Empire.

"They call me 'the dainty Dresden China Miss' at home," says Miss Rogers, "and last winter I starred in *Iole*, by Robert W. Chambers, a play founded on his book of that name. It is a great pleasure to me to play in England, and though this is my first visit, I hope it won't be my last. By the way, the night I opened at the Empire, when I arrived at the theatre to make up I found my dressing-table and room decorated with the loveliest asparagus ferns, in huge trails. The girls in the theatre had done it as a surprise—and to bring me luck—because of my strange Christian name."

The Sleeping Beauty at Drury Lane this year is to be played by Miss Ferne Rogers, a charming young American actress.

Miss Nancy Buckland, who made such a hit in pantomime at Plymouth last year, and she has been engaged to appear at Drury Lane.

Miss Nancy Buckland, a dainty little actress who made a big hit in pantomime last year, is also playing at Drury Lane. She was principal girl at Plymouth last winter, and there Mr. Arthur Collins saw her, and engaged her for Drury Lane at once. Lately she has been scoring in Phyllis Dare's part in *The Arcadians*, on tour, and may be seen in London in a new musical comedy soon.

At the Aldwych Theatre, "Prince Charming," in *Cinderella*, will be played by Miss Lily Iris, a very popular principal boy. Miss Iris is a great traveller, and has had many adventures. She visited China once on a holiday tour, and had made up her mind that the trip was to be quite free from work. But while she was staying at a big English "station" she was seen and

Cinderella at the Aldwych Theatre is to have a dashing principal boy in the person of Miss Lily Iris, while—

recognised by an officer who had heard her sing many times in England. He begged her to give himself and his messmates a real treat and sing to them one night. She did, and that "one night" developed into a nightly concert while her visit lasted.

At the same theatre Miss Julia James will take the part of "Cinders"—and a charming Cinderella this auburn-haired actress should make. Miss James has played leading parts in drama, musical comedy, pantomime, and revue. The other day, when asked to name her favourite hobby, she replied: "I don't go in for hobbies as a rule, but I've got one at the moment, and it's this—wishing all the Germans were killed! It's a fine hobby, and I indulge in it every day and all day."

Fresh from her triumph in *The Cinema Star*, Miss Dorothy Ward will be found playing principal boy in *Humpty Dumpty* at the Princes', Bristol. Miss Ward has been described as the "Ideal Principal Boy"—and it is certainly true. Last year at Manchester she made a huge success, and on the last night her motor was filled with flowers, ropes were attached to the front of it, and she was dragged back to the hotel by a crowd of admirers, all singing her pantomime songs.

In the same pantomime the principal girl will be Miss Moya Mannering, a pretty English actress who has recently returned from a successful season in America.

"They were awfully kind to me in the States," says

—No daintier Cinderella could be imagined than Miss Julia James, who is to play the part of the little cinder-wench.

—And will find a charming supporter in Miss Moya Mannering, a pretty English actress, who is sure to make a hit.

Miss Mannering, "and though I must say that American newspaper interviewers are fearful and wonderful things, I couldn't help laughing at some of the ridiculous stories printed about me. For instance, one enterprising reporter declared, in print, that I travelled with two huge trunks filled with love letters! Well, I've had a few love letters, certainly, but two trunk loads? Oh, no!"

A musical star, in the attractive person of Miss Marie Blanche, is making her first appearance in pantomime this year as principal boy in *Robinson Crusoe*, at the Grand Theatre, Leeds. Miss Blanche has had a meteoric theatrical career, and she will be the youngest principal boy in England this Christmas.

Her stage chances have all been unexpected. She made her first appearance in London through the sudden illness of Miss Iris Hoey, in *Princess*

A welcome addition to the ranks of pantomime stars is Miss Marie Blanche, who has been cast for principal boy in *Robinson Crusoe*, at the Grand Theatre, Leeds.

Caprice, at the Shaftesbury; later, at a few hours' notice, she played Miss Clara Evelyn's part in the same play.

When Iris Hoey left the cast of the *Pearl Girl*, Marie Blanche again took her place, with few rehearsals, and was afterwards sent for to play the "Joy-Ride Lady" at the New Theatre, which part she studied and played in four days. Her latest success has been on the music-halls, and she is looking forward to her first pantomime part with keen interest.

Clever Elise Malpass is to be principal girl in *Dick Whittington*, at the Theatre Royal, Sheffield. She is a versatile girl, for she sings, dances, and plays the piano. She is one of the youngest artists to do a turn

Lyceum Royal, Sheffield, is to have a [illegible] principal girl in Miss Elise Malpass, who will appear in *Dick Whittington*.

entirely alone at the London Coliseum. Little Miss Elise is a wonderful swimmer, and declares laughingly that if everything else fails she will one day do a "tank" act! This summer, while spending her holidays at the seaside, she was able to save the life of a small child, who, while playing on the sands, got caught by a big wave, and dragged out to sea. Miss Malpass plunged in, and brought the struggling, terrified child safely to shore, though this "girl with the ringlets" is little more than a child herself.

Photo James Hoon & Sons, Newcastle-on-Tyne

Mr. Fred Allandale and Miss Marie Ash are to play together in *Little Miss Muffit*, at the Theatre Royal, Glasgow.

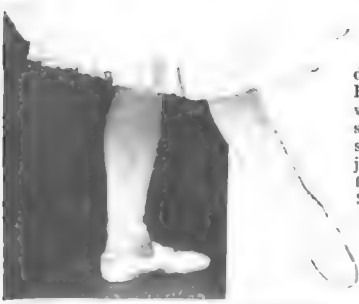
At Glasgow Miss Marie Ash and Mr. Fred Allandale will be found playing together in *Little Miss Muffit*, at the Theatre Royal. Miss Ash is known everywhere as "Ellaline

Terriss' double," and she is certainly like her, both in voice and face. Often her friends declare she has "cut" them at various places, which she knows she has not been *near!* Of course it is Miss Terriss they have seen.

To Mr. Fred Allandale belongs the distinction of being the first man to appear in a "boy's" part in pantomime. It was customary for "boys" to be played by girls until an enterprising manager allowed Mr. Allandale to appear as a romantic pantomime "boy"—and the experiment was such a success that "Bobby" Allandale has been in pantomime ever since, while his example has been extensively followed.

Miss Nora Delany is sure to win laurels at the Theatre Royal, Birmingham, where she will play principal boy in *Sinbad the Sailor*.

Known as "The Girl in Uniform," Miss Nora Delany is popular with music-hall and pantomime playgoers all over England. This year she is to be principal boy in *Sinbad the Sailor*, at the Theatre Royal Birmingham where George Robey is also playing. Miss Delany is devoted to open-air sports of all kinds; she is a keen golfer, an ardent motorist, and a brilliant horsewoman. Last summer she won a handsome trophy for fence-jumping at Richmond Park—a record among pantomime principal boys.



Miss Florence Phillips is a great favourite with Birmingham audiences, and her solo dancing will be quite a feature of *Sinbad the Sailor*.

In *Sinbad the Sailor*, at Birmingham, will be found Miss Florence Phillips, as solo dancer, this being her fifth consecutive appearance in pantomime at Birmingham where she is a great favourite. Miss Phillips, who has been asked to understudy both Genée and Pavlova, is a wonderful dancer, and a "discovery" of Mr. George Edwardes', under whose management she was recently playing. When making her first stage appearance at the Gaiety, Miss Phillips' shoe came unfastened; and, after a sudden jerk, flew off right into the stalls—so she finished her solo wearing only one shoe! She has always regarded the loss of that shoe as a good omen, for it undoubtedly brought her luck.

At the early age of ten Miss Phillips won gold and silver medals for her dancing of Irish and Scotch reels and hornpipes at Conservatorium examinations.

Miss Ivey Latimer and Miss Luna Love will be playing together as principal boy

and girl respectively, at the Tyne Theatre, Newcastle, in *The House that Jack Built*. Ivey Latimer has played in pantomime twice before, but this is her first appearance as principal boy. She has an exceptionally fine singing voice, which has been thoroughly trained, and she is also an experienced pianist.

Miss Billie Evelyn, who is to be principal girl in *Aladdin* at the Hippodrome, Croydon, and afterwards on tour, had a strange experience while touring recently. At Bolton she bought a dog, of the "Cæsar" type, and was walking into the station on Sunday, on

Photo Carbonara Co., Liverpool.

The House that Jack Built, at the Tyne Theatre, Newcastle, will boast a pretty principal girl in Miss Luna Love, while—

Photo F. Henderson, Alnwick.

Miss Billie Evelyn will take the leading girl's part in *Aladdin*, at the Hippodrome, Croydon

—The part of principal boy will be played by Miss Ivey Latimer, who has a wonderfully fine singing voice.

Last year, while playing principal girl, she received a pathetic letter from a cripple boy begging her to sing a certain song he had heard her sing the previous year, as he was being brought specially to the theatre to see her again. So Miss Latimer asked permission to include the song that night, and though she did not know him she sang it to please the little cripple boy.

her way to the next town, when a strange man dashed up and shouted, "That's *my* dog! You shan't leave this place; you're a thief!" He dragged Miss Evelyn to the police station, a crowd of urchins following them. She explained that she had *bought* the dog from the landlord of her hotel, and was finally allowed to go when the man

was satisfied that the dog had been stolen by someone unknown, and must have passed through several hands before she purchased it. The landlord kindly refunded the money she had paid—but poor Miss Evelyn lost her dog, and her train!

At the Theatre Royal, Nottingham, Miss Josie Delaine is to appear as principal boy. At the age of three Miss Delaine made her first appearance at a *matinée*, being sent on the stage for fun. The conductor asked, "What can *you* sing?"—and she promptly replied, "Oh, Mr. Porter, What Can I Do?"—this being a popular song at the time. She sang it through, and the audience, in delight, threw pennies at her, which she didn't hesitate to pick up. At last her mother, Miss Florrie Gallimore, came on and carried her off! When Miss Delaine made her first appearance in pantomime she had the unique experience of playing "Alice" in *Dick Whittington*, while her mother appeared as "Dick."

Photo Ralph & Co., Bristol.
Miss Josie Delaine makes a charming principal boy, and is destined to do great things at the Theatre Royal, Nottingham.

Following her big success last year in Nottingham Miss Ruby Louis is to be principal girl this Christmas in *Humpty Dumpty*, at the Marlborough Theatre, Holloway. She is a popular musical comedy artiste, but loves playing in pantomime for a change.

Photo Brown, Bevan, & Bell, Liverpool.
This Christmas will find Miss Ruby Louis playing principal girl in *Humpty Dumpty*, at the Marlborough Theatre, Holloway.

At the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh, Miss Edna Morgan is to be Prince Charming in *Cinderella*. Miss Morgan considers this part her favourite pantomime *rôle*; she is certainly an attractive Prince to woo and win any Miss Cinders who ever lost her glass slipper.

Photo Claude Harris.
Cinderella, at the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh, will have a gallant Prince Charming in Miss Edna Morgan.

Last Christmas Miss Morgan was stopped outside the stage door by a strange woman, poorly dressed, who said: "Oh, Miss, do forgive me! I want to ask you a great favour. My little girl comes to the pantomime every year, but she's broken her leg, and won't see it this winter. She's seen your photograph in the paper, and she does love you so much. Will you come and see her?"

Miss Morgan went, and also arranged that her little friend should see the pantomime from a box.

GAMBOL'S CHRISTMAS DIARY

JESSIE POPE.

The Dog Star, as you all know, lives in the sky, but the star dog lives in a simple British family, and this is his account of the festive season.—Ed. R.M.

CHRISTMAS EVE.

3.30. "What's this Christmas everybody's talking about?" I remark to our cat Bunty on the opposite armchair by the fire.

Bunty stops washing to look at me, off hind leg still pointing to ceiling.

"Why, it's a day, of sorts," she replies, "and, as a matter of fact, it's to morrow."

"Oh, lor!" I say blankly. "I thought it was a *joint!* Anyhow, I heard our folks say they were going to have it on Friday, and they asked some people to help them eat it."

"Joint!" sneers Bunty. "There'll be one or two of them, and a turkey and a hare as well, I shouldn't wonder."

"Ah, *now* you're talking! That'll mean a rich lick for you and me—eh, old dear?"

"Don't make too sure, you greedy urchin," she says. "What's the good of having a lot of extra food if they have extra people to eat it?"

"Who's coming?"

"The usual gang," rep'ied Bunty. "Miss Sylvia's soldier boy—at least, he's not *her* soldier boy yet, but we hope he will be before Christmas is over. Don't see how he can get out of it with all this mistletoe hanging about. Then, there's the Master's aunt. She's a terror, and don't you forget it. All right if she takes a fancy to you, but if she doesn't, up goes your number. She likes *me*, but I don't fancy she'll have much use for mongrel pups."

3.40. Entrance of Sarah, the housemaid. Seizes me by scruff of neck, and carries me to scullery, saying:

"Come along, Gambol—we'll make you a nice clean boy for Christmas."

Wrench myself out of her arms, and retire snarling, under sink. Pokes me out with broom handle, and pops me in tub of warm soapsuds. Nasty jar for my nerves. Takes all the spunk out of me. Stand shivering violently, beseeching Sarah with pathetic glances to put an end to my agony. She gets a lot of soap in my eyes instead. There are times when I like Sarah; this isn't one of them.

3.50. Gives me final sluice under tap, and rinses me with tepid blue-water, but I fancy I get even with her when I follow her about, shaking myself.

4.0. Lie on old blanket in front of library fire to dry. Our Miss Sylvia comes in, kneels down, and buries her face in my coat, and starts kissing and slobbering over me.

Disturbed by strange man, with sack over his shoulder, trying to enter front gate. Not if I know it! Give tongue, and go for his seedy trousers.

"How nice and clean you smell, Gambol," she says. More kisses and slobbering; nice for me, just been washed, too.

"I believe *he's* coming to-morrow, Gambol," she goes on. "Oh, puppykins, how *glorious* if he *does!*"

Personally, I don't feel very interested, but I have a romp round the table and along the hall with her, as she seems in such spirits. Pretty girl; nice, generous ways with biscuits and chocolates. Saved me from the flood, too, that overwhelmed my brothers and sisters.

Chase her round library, and across hall. Can't keep hold of her skirt, though. Nothing of it! Wish girls would wear fluffy petticoats you could get a grip on with your teeth.

4.10. Am pulled up short by delicious odour ascending kitchen stairs. Stagger about with nose in air, almost intoxicated by it.

"What's this smell?" I gasp to Bunty, who is strolling by, making for her milk saucer.

"Hare!" she says. "Not bad, eh?"

"Wot oh, not 'arf," I reply. "Are they going to have it for afternoon tea?"

"No—that's for to-morrow," she sneers. "What a little heathen you are! But you'll learn as you go along."

So will she, when she gets to her saucer, which I licked dry three minutes ago.

5.0. Slip out in garden to finish off drying process by good roll on flower-beds. Disturbed by strange man, with sack over his shoulder, trying to enter front gate. Not if I know it! Give tongue, and go for his seedy trousers. Missus comes out of house door at a heavy trot. He kids her that he's the auxiliary postman, and says he was just going to write "Dog loose" on the letters, and take 'em back to the office.

"Oh, you needn't be nervous of Gambol—he's only a puppy," she says.

"He's a—he's a *nice little dorg*, mum," says he, suddenly remembering his Christmas-box, but keeping his distance. Struggle from Missus' arms, and chase him up the street. I'll give him auxiliary postman!

5.30. Great excitement indoors over parcels and letters. Miss Sylvia collars most of them. Rotten lot; nothing toothsome in the whole batch. Christmas cards bore me stiff. Satisfy cravings with bits of brown paper and string. Something to bite at, but insipid flavour.

6.12. Arrival of Great Aunt. Gaunt-looking old geyser, with a fierce eye. Wears an interesting black thing on her head with shining bobbles on it, that nod cheekily at me every time she moves. I'll be even with them later. Too far away at the moment.

7.0. Consternation in family circle at non-arrival of turkey, to be sent from country farm. Master says it's Missus' fault, driving everything off to the last moment. Missus says it's Miss Sylvia's, who probably forgot to put the address when she wrote the order. Miss Sylvia, with a soft sparkle in her eye, and the corner of her soldier boy's Christmas card sticking out of the front of her blouse, says in any case there's plenty of food in the house, so it doesn't much matter. Great Aunt glares at her, and says she doesn't know what young people are coming to, and must admit I agree that the girl shows too much indifference about the matter.

In the middle of family squabble, loud knock at front door. I give tongue, and get there first; Miss Sylvia a good second. Railway man with big hamper. Turkey at last! They open the lid, and disclose bulky, pallid object trimmed with holly berries and leaves. Master takes it out.

"Twenty pounds if an ounce," he says cheerfully.

"Noble bird!" cries Great Aunt, all smiles.

"Only hope I shall be able to get it in the oven," says cook, as she bears it to the kitchen, with me at her heels. Shuts larder door in my face with a bang. Low-bred woman! In my opinion, doors are the greatest drawback to civilised life. Even the dining-room door is shut, though, from clatter of plates and laughter, family are having a great time the other side of it.

Find Bunty purring on the straw in empty turkey hamper, by kitchen fire. Rout her out, and try it myself. Not so dusty. Coil round in a knot, and watch cook making mince pies till eyes shut down—and drop off to well-earned slumber.

7.15 a.m. Wake and wonder where, who, and what I am.. Remember I'm Gambol, the cutest mongrel pup in the world bar none—*and it's Christmas morning*. Run up to Miss Sylvia's bed to give her the compliments of the season. Find her sulky with sleep, so have a bit of a rag with pale blue satin slipper, till her ladyship routs me out and puts it across me. Then she also remembers what day it is, and we have a great kissing and cuddling contest. I score on points, and get a bow of red, white, and blue ribbon for my pains. Can't eat it, as she pins it up behind my ear with one of her beastly hairpins.

9.0. Stroll about with nose in air, snuffing delicious fragrance of fried sausages. Find Bunty doing same. Cheek! Chivvy her up three flights of stairs, round boxroom, and down again, nearly bowling over Great Aunt on downward career.

"Drat the cat!" she says, fortunately not catching sight of your humble. Bunty gets a sharp lift from a knobby foot in a cashmere boot, and retires under dresser in kitchen to have a quick wash and a think.

9.10. Burn nose in trying to peep under breakfast dish cover on dining-room table. Maddened by pain, step on side of dish. Over it goes; lid comes off quite easily, and sausages roll in all directions. Annex one as Sarah enters, and, hearing footsteps, fortunately only has time to put sausages in dish and straighten things up as family enters. Convey seasonable greetings in my very best manner, and get a smile and pat on the head from Great Aunt.

"Dear little doggie," she says, "what great innocent brown eyes!"

Sit by her side during meal, and find her quite generous with any bits she doesn't fancy.

11.0. Great Aunt and Missus go to church, Master for quick walk to get up an appetite for two o'clock dinner. Miss Sylvia stays in to arrange the dessert, and think it my duty to stay and keep her company, considering our mutual weakness for preserved fruit.

11.30. Tall, dark-haired young man in khaki, named Percy, arrives while we are in the middle of it. Miss Sylvia drops half a candied pear she had been sampling, with very red face—ashamed at being caught in the act I suppose. I quickly remove traces of her guilt, before transferring my attention to Percy's puttees.

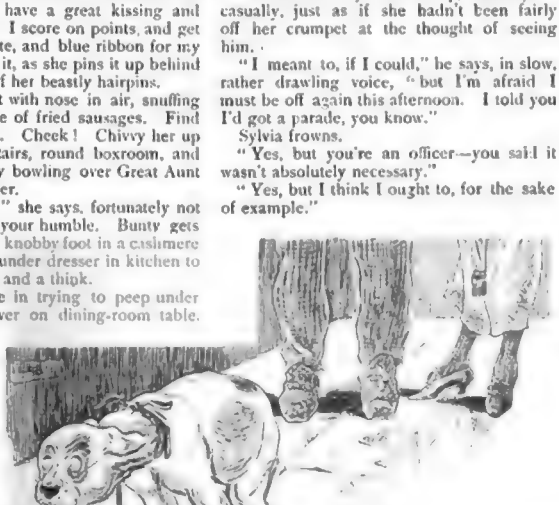
"Wondered if you'd turn up," said Sylvia casually, just as if she hadn't been fairly off her crumpet at the thought of seeing him.

"I meant to, if I could," he says, in slow, rather drawling voice, "but I'm afraid I must be off again this afternoon. I told you I'd got a parade, you know."

Sylvia frowns.

"Yes, but you're an officer—you said it wasn't absolutely necessary."

"Yes, but I think I ought to, for the sake of example."



Vet prizes open my jaws, and pours some filthy muck down my throat. Ghastly sensation—stagger about yard. Draw a veil over all that follows.

Page 244, col. 1.

"And I think you *oughtn't* to, for the sake of Christmas," she says pouting.

"Well, don't let us worry about that," he replies, looking at her with a slow smile that wipes out Sylvia's pout at once. "Haven't you got some holly or, or—er—mistletoe you want a tall chap to hang up for you?"

"There are a few sprigs of *holly*," she admits, "waiting for you in the hall—but you must look at my presents first. I've had thirteen, up to date. I've been jolly lucky, haven't I?"

"Jolly *unlucky*, you mean," says he: "and I've got nothing to give you to make it fourteen."

"Oh, don't worry, I'm not superstitious."

"But I am. I don't mean to let you take any chances, if I can help it."

Suddenly he takes his knife out of his pocket and cuts a button off his tunic.

"There," he exclaims, "will that break the spell?"

"Oh, *rather!*" cries Sylvia. "I'd love to have it—a soldier's button!"

"Yes, and a bachelor's button, too," he complains, "though from circumstance rather than choice."

Her face grows very red again. He draws nearer, and the front door bell rings suddenly.

Missus and Great Aunt back from church. Percy and Sylvia skip into the hall, and begin putting up the green stuff for all they are worth.

Help cook wash up by licking dinner-plates clean. Silly idiot washes them all the same, though. [Page 244, col. 1.]

2.15. Triumphant entry of turkey into dining-room, borne by Sarah, smiling through fragrant steam, and followed by Bunty and self, tails up. Master rises in his seat to do justice to the carving. Settles glasses on his nose, and looks round sternly.

"Now, first of all," he says, "turn the animals out of the room."

"Oh, Pater!" cries Sylvia, "not *Gumbo!* It's his first turkey. He wasn't born last Christmas."

"And I sometimes wish he wasn't born *this*," says her stern parent. "Turn 'em out."

That man's the pink limit!

"Yes, yes, do what your father wishes, girlie," urges Missus. "Don't spoil his dinner!"

Sylvia pouts, but obeys. Beastly door shut again. Bunty strolls down to the kitchen after the fish-plates, but I stick to the wrong side of the door, and derive what sustenance I can through the cracks.

2.35. Door opens to admit housemaid. Slip in after her skirts, unseen, to find room full of chatter and delicious fragrance. Sneak under table. Pick my way over feet, avoiding Great Aunt's cashmere boots, Missus' (velvet), Percy's (service), till I reach Sylvia's silk-stockinged tootsies; she's kicked off her high-heeled slippers—a bit tight, I suppose.

Claw gently at her dress: she puts down a stealthy hand and drags me up on her knee under tablecloth, and feeds me with surreptitious snacks, talking merrily to stern parent the while. Bless her!

She has put Percy on opposite side of table to show she doesn't want to sit beside him, but keeps fondling button in her hand all the time.

3.15. Unfortunate interlude over Christmas pudding. Sylvia, in the joy of her young heart, has previously inserted usual mascots—sixpence, thimble, button, ring—in fond hope of getting the last. Unfortunately, Great Aunt, greedy old geyser, puts large portion in her mouth and cracks false tooth on thimble.

"Is this a joke?" she inquires fiercely, putting it on side of her plate.

"Oh, no, auntie dear," says Sylvia; "it's only a mascot."

"What does it mean?" goes on Great Aunt, glaring all round.

"It means *old maid*," says the Master. "Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!"

"Well!" cries Great Aunt, "if I'd thought you had invited me here to insult me, I'd better have stopped at home. And let me

tell all of you, if I am an old maid, it's not for want of asking."

Family exchanges distressed glances, but the bold Percy jumps into the breach.

"I can quite believe it," he says, "and, if I were a few years older, it shouldn't be from want of asking *now!*"

He smiles at Great Aunt, and she melts.

"Oh, go away with you!" she says. Situation saved.

3.45. Percy slips away for parade. Sylvia follows him into hall. I follow Sylvia.

"Don't go," she implores; "you'll spoil my Christmas if you do."

"I'm sorry," he replies, "but it's the call of duty."

"Rubbish!" said Sylvia. "You're bored—that's what it is."

"To show you I'm not," he replies, "I'll come back as soon as it's over."

"Oh, you needn't trouble," snaps Sylvia.

"Right oh!" he retorts, and goes.

Sylvia sniffs a bit, then suddenly pounces on me.

"Oh, Gambol," she says, "where's my button? I had it on my knee at dinner, and now it's gone!"

Hurries back to dining-room, now empty, and searches under table.

"I believe you've eaten it!" she exclaims, seizing hold of me and looking me so fiercely in the eye that I look away. "You *have*, you wicked, cruel dog; and now he's gone, and I told him not to come back again, and I've got nothing left of him at all."

Sympathetic housemaid comes in to clear table; finds Sylvia piping her eye and hears the whole story.

"Gambol's got it, miss!" she says. "E'll eat up anything, the rascal! You take 'im to the vet's, miss. He'll get it back for you. Mr. Percy gave you the button to break the bad luck. Like as not, if you lose it he'll go and get killed by the Germans."

Sylvia gives a groan, then rushes upstairs for her hat and coat, and sneaks out of house with me on the lead.

4.15. Arrive at vet's. Sylvia, pale and panting, tells him I've eaten a button.

"It won't hurt him," observes the vet.

"But I *must* have it *back!*" says Sylvia, her blue eyes full of tears.

Vet prizes open my jaws, and pours some filthy muck down my throat. Ghastly sensation—stagger about yard. Draw a veil over all that follows.

"Not there, miss," says the vet. "Plenty of odds and ends, but no button."

4.30. Return home in Sylvia's arms, feeling like a punctured balloon. Meet tall figure in khaki under street gas-lamp. She puts me down quickly.

Rush along passage to drawing-room door, and fling myself with muffled yelps against it.

"Hullo!" says Percy. "I went back to see if I might come and spend the evening, and Sarah said you'd gone to the vet's with the pup. What's wrong?"

"Oh, nothing much," replies Sylvia. "I thought he'd eaten something that had disagreed with him, but he—he hadn't. In any case, it doesn't matter now."

Doesn't it, indeed! What price me? I claw up at her dress to be carried again, and get my paw caught in a bit of drapery. Sylvia stoops to shake me off, and—lo and behold!—there, lying snug at the bottom of a pleat, shines the *button!*

"Why, there it is, after all!" she cries joyfully, forgetting Percy for a moment.

"What?" asks he.

"Oh, nothing," says Sylvia, with a very red face, shoving the lost button in her handbag. Percy asks no more questions, but fancy he spotted it all the same.

5 ... Have excellent blow-out in kitchen,

under Sylvia's superintendence — turkey, sausage, brandy-sauce, hare, pudding, all in a glorious mix up. Feel my own man again. Help cook wash up by licking dinner-plates clean. Silly idiot washes them all the same, though. Retire upstairs for nap, and find soft snoozing place on Great Aunt's bed.

6.30. Waked by housemaid coming to light gas and tidy room. Doesn't see me, but when she's gone catch sight of curious object, like huge, black, hunched-up rat, on chair, with a bunch of glittering things on its head and two long, black tails. Approach cautiously, crouch, and spring.

"I'll teach you to have two tails!" I snarl. Poor-spirited thing makes no resistance. Dribble it under bed and round bedroom, leaping and pouncing down on it all four feet at once. Hunt it round landing, and down the stairs.

Finally pull it down in basement, and get to death grips outside kitchen door. Worry! Worry! Worry!

6.50. Sudden appearance of Sarah. Seizes victim and carries it straight to family in drawing-room, with me jumping up after all that's left of one tail.

"Lor, Missus," cries Sarah, "look what this wicked rascal's gone and done to the old lady's bonnet!"

"Eh—what's that?" cries Great Aunt, suddenly waking up from forty winks in armchair. "That's not my bonnet! My bonnet was a *new* bonnet!"

"Yes, it is, mum," says Sarah. "I found 'im eating of it down the kitchen stairs."

Loud bewailings and lamentations. Master approaches me, swiftly taking off slipper as he comes. Turn tail and retreat in disorder, and find cover under kitchen sink. He runs me to earth, fetches me out with his slippered foot, and raises arm with fellow slipper fiercely gripped in relentless hand.

"*Ye—hel—lp! Ye—hel—lp! Ye—how—ow—ow! Ye—hel—hel—help!*"

7.0. Am precipitated into cold, dark, unsympathetic back garden. Festive Christmas night for me, I *don't* think! Hate the whole gang of them! They don't deserve to have a dear little, innocent, playful puppy.

Massage my sore back and make up my mind to find my way to the main road and commit suicide under a motor-bus.

7.45. Hear cook scraping saucepan inside scullery. Think I'll postpone suicide till I see if she puts it outside to make room on the sink. She does. What's more, contents are quite interesting, though saucepan a trifle small. Brandy-sauce, as I'm a sinner!

Lick round sides, but can't reach the bottom. Shove it against scullery step, and push. Head goes in with a pop. Quite a lot left on bottom. Try to remove head. Have some difficulty. Try again; no success. Have a go at it with front paws, then with back ones; head still fast.

Go mad! Tear round garden, clanking helmet on gravel path, catching handle in shrubs and bushes; finally batter self and saucepan against scullery door. Out come cook and Sarah. Blind past them, falling over everything as I go; rush along passage to drawing-room door, and fling myself with muffled yelps against it. Door flung open; rush into room.

8.0. Shrieks, shouts, *howls* of laughter from every voice present, including Great Aunt's. Am lifted on table. Fall over on side and wag tail-stump with agonised supplication. Sylvia seizes me in her arms, saucepan and all; they have a tug-of-war, some holding me, some the saucepan.

"Oh, how can we get the darling out?" cries Sylvia. "*Percy*, help me!"

"I'll do it," cries Percy, seized with a bright idea. Pulls out his barbed-wire cutters, and, while Sylvia holds me fast, he nibbles a slit in side of aluminium saucepan, and bends it open.

8.15. Free at last! See soft lamp-light and beloved faces of my family. Try to rub brandy sauce—how I loathe the stuff!—from my cheeks on to the carpet, while family go off into peals of laughter again.

8.30. Have a bread-and-milk supper, and am tucked into basket by Sylvia, who stands over me, with Percy at her side.

"Poor little Gambol!" she says. "What a day you've had! Great Auntie's bonnet, then your own, and, oh! that awful time at the vet's!"

"And all for a bachelor's button!" remarks Percy.

"How did you know?" cries Sylvia in confusion.

"I saw it in the fold of your dress," he says. "Oh, Sylvia, did you really worry about losing my poor little button?"

"Ask Gambol!" says Sylvia.

But he doesn't. He takes her in his arms and kisses her for about five minutes Then they wander away hand in hand—and forget all about me, of course.

Oh, well, they're all happy and good-tempered at last, thanks to me. Every dog must have his Christmas Day. I've had mine, and, taking the rough with the smooth, I'm not sorry it's over.

PICTURE PARAGRAPHS

The Editor will be Pleased to Purchase Photographs of an Interesting and Out-of-the-Way Nature. All Photographs should be Accompanied by a Short Description.

Photo H. J. Shepstone

The youngest user of the telephone is a four months' old baby in Guernsey, who, by means of a telephone transmitter in his pram, calls his mother on waking.

THE TELEPHONE AS NURSEMAID.

A NEW use for the telephone has been found in Guernsey, where a four months' old baby sleeps out in the open air with a telephone transmitter at his side, by which he calls his mother on waking.

This fortunate baby belongs to the engineer-in-charge at Platte Fougère Lighthouse Station, who hit upon an ingenious plan to enable his little son to benefit by the good sea air. Inside the perambulator is a cigar box containing the telephone transmitter and a small clock. By means of wires running up to the house, twenty yards away, the mother is enabled to hear directly the baby cries.

The clock forms a very useful part of the device, for the sound of its ticking provides the necessary proof that the telephone is transmitting sounds correctly.

This method of employing the telephone as nursemaid has proved entirely successful, and is in daily use. To provide against bad weather a rain alarm has also been evolved which gives warning by causing a bell to ring directly a shower comes on; thus the baby can be rescued before there is any chance of his getting wet.

ROLLING A ROOF.

THE roofs of peasants' dwellings in Eastern countries are invariably flat, and in Palestine it is no uncommon sight to see natives industriously rolling them. The exterior of the roof is covered with a coating of mortar and clay, which, after being pressed with a stone roller or pounded with a board, becomes hard enough to shed the rain.

The peasants use their roofs a great deal, both for storing goods and, during the hot season, as a sleeping place. A steep outside staircase is provided so that the family may have easy access to what, in the case of a crowded house and sultry weather, must be a real haven of refuge.

A native of Palestine rolling his roof, which is coated with mortar and clay, and is in great demand both as store-room and sleeping-room for the family.

Photo H. J. Mapleton.
Two huge coils of rope which were turned out in the record time of twenty-four hours.

A RECORD IN ROPES.

These two enormous coils of rope, one measuring 1500 feet and the other [illegible] feet, were turned out in the record time of twenty-four hours. A British steamer had been stranded off the coast of North Carolina, and owing to the heavy sea it was found that unless she could be got off without delay the vessel would be pounded to pieces.

The ship's hawsers and those of the tugs sent to her assistance snapped on account of the severe strain put upon them, and an order for fresh hawsers was sent to a manufacturer with the result that within twenty-four hours the rope was on its way to pull the ship from her perilous position.

HELP THE BELGIANS!

One of the most ardent workers for the Belgian refugees in Hythe is Gebby, a splendid dog belonging to Mr. C. Randolph Lichfield, whose stories have so often delighted Royal readers.

Gebby has collected about £4 for different funds in connection with the war: we feel sure there are few who could resist his appeal.

A BATTLESHIP'S BUOY.

The buoy made for the new type of Brazilian Dreadnought is a most imposing affair, 18 feet in diameter and 13 feet in depth. It is made of steel plates three-eighths of an inch in thickness, and has four water-tight compartments. A forged iron mooring bar passes through its centre, and it will withstand a breaking strain of 185 tons.

On the outside of the buoy is a wooden fender, made of elm, which protects it from collisions. The buoy itself, with mooring bar, weighs fifteen tons. The smaller buoy alongside is 3 feet in diameter, and a type of the smallest buoy made.

The largest battleship buoys are those made for the new Brazilian Dreadnoughts by Messrs. Brown, Lenox & Co. The small buoy is a type of the smallest made.

Photo C. Randolph Lichfield.
Gebby, an enterprising dog, who has collected about £4 for different war funds.

A PLUNGE TO DEATH.

BEFORE they left Tirlemont the Germans blew up the bridge of the main street, which crosses the River Marne. The entire bridge was not destroyed, but only the centre arch, so that the gap was not noticed by travellers until they were actually on the bridge.

The Germans probably intended this as a death-trap for the French who might pursue them, but they did not reckon on causing the death of their own countrymen. A few hours after the Kaiser's troops had departed, however, a German motor-car came dashing along with an officer and two soldiers in it, and before the terrified chauffeur could pull up, the car had pitched over into the river.

Pinned down by the car there was no hope for the occupants, who were all killed like rats in a trap.

One can imagine the joy of the Belgians when they discovered that the trap so cunningly laid by the enemy had proved fatal to three of their own number, and had lost them a valuable car into the bargain.

A bridge over the River Marne, which was blown up by the Germans, and over which a German officer and two soldiers were precipitated in a motor-car.

IS THE MOTOR-CYCLE MOVING?

PHOTOGRAPHY is a tricky business, and the slightest movement of the camera is often fraught with strange results.

The picture shows Mr. Sidney Crawley on a 3½ h.p. Triumph crossing the finishing line at the Brighton Speed Trials, at a speed of more than a mile a minute. The curious part of it is that, owing to a slight movement of the camera, the man on the motor-cycle appears almost stationary, while the car and spectators seem to be in full flight. As a matter of fact the car was drawn up so that the occupants might see the finish of the race, and the motor-cycle was going at full speed.

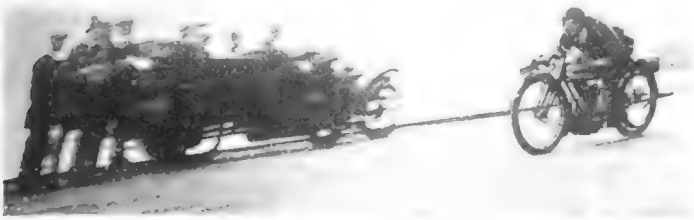


Photo The Motor Cycle

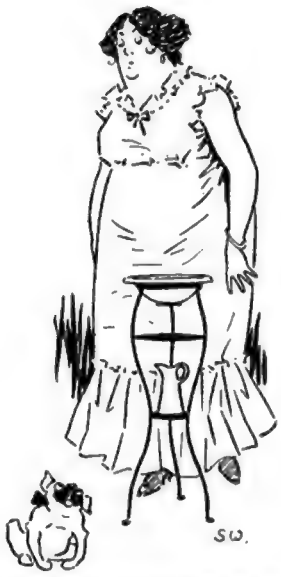
A slight movement of the camera is responsible for the fact that in this photograph the car appears to be moving and the motor-cycle stationary, while really just the opposite was the case.

A LICK and A PROMISE

The Ordeal by Water Depicted by Leading Humorous Artists.

By Dorothy Rose.

Mr. Thompson gives us washing in prehistoric days when sandstone did duty for soap and towels were unknown.



"A Misfit"—Mr. Starr Wood's contemporaneous portrait of Lady C——ntr——ted with a diminutive wash-basin.

There is a delusion abroad that the entire British nation spends the first ten minutes of every morning submerged in icy water, doing great deeds with sponge and soap. In some households the family do perhaps line up outside the bathroom and dispute lustily for the privilege of first innings, but this is the exception, as a stroll down the poorer quarters of any large town will prove. There are streets where water, save in the form of rain, is unknown, and a clean face is ample proof that the owner has been out in a shower without an umbrella.

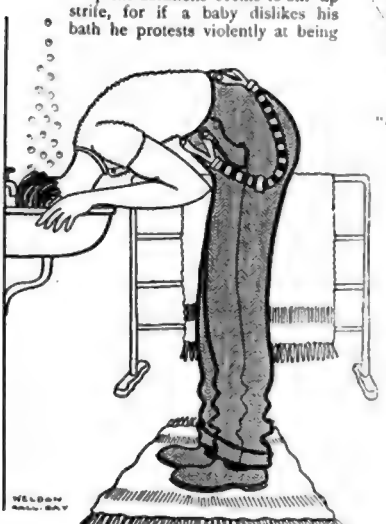
In most circles, however, it is considered necessary to wash the face at least once a day. With the modern maiden this is an imposing ceremony, accompanied by a rapt expression and countless yards of flannel, which she wields with the dreamy air of one who ministers at a shrine. In the case of a man the process is usually marked by much spluttering and blowing; indeed, the amount of water the average man bestows on the floor during the ceremony of washing would almost float a monitor, while more extensive

operations usually result in a tidal wave of destruction.

This is, of course, only true of those who take their ablutions seriously. The man who gets up at 8.15 to catch the 8.55 to the City usually limits his washing operations to a few furtive dabs, and is hardly on bowing terms with the soap. Others, again, harbour the delusion that by employing the submarine method and immersing the head in water until purple in the face, all the demands of cleanliness are satisfied.

Some people, on the other hand, make quite a hobby of washing, and spend strenuous moments armed with soap and pumice-stone obliterating imaginary dirt. An atmosphere of soapsuds is to them the choicest aroma, and if an earthquake was imminent they would not dream of escaping without first washing their hands and face. A speck of soot moves them to tears, and they only really live when wallowing in a bath full of hot water, with an extensive equipment of soap, sponges, and towels at their command.

Even from the cradle the necessity for frequent ablutions seems to stir up strife, for if a baby dislikes his bath he protests violently at being



"Bubbles."—A delightful study of the man who indulges in the submarine method, by Mr. Weldon Halliday.

"A Free Wash."—A touching little sketch of an artist having his face washed, by Mr. Alfred Leete.

plunged into the water, while, if he enjoys it, he squeals all the more vigorously when he is hauled out. It is a strange fact that the small boy who will cheerfully drench himself with water from a hose or will laboriously select all the puddles to walk in, has usually a rooted aversion from washing his face.

There seems to be a special providence which watches over some people and prevents their getting dirty; they have the knack of keeping clean however they may be employed, and will emerge from the dirtiest jobs speckless and immaculate. Other folks, on the contrary, become grimy on the least provocation, and at the end of an ordinary working day bear a family resemblance to a coalheaver. The stoke-hole of an Atlantic liner would leave some people unspotted, while the mere act of sharpening a

beside his master and watched the passing of soup and fish impassively.

Next a chicken wing was set before the crippled diner. He hacked at it ineffectually with his left hand, scattering gravy upon the tablecloth. At the same time he became acutely conscious of Philippa's scrutiny. With a gesture of irritation he pushed away the plate.

Philippa started up on impulse.

"Let me help you," she said. "It's impossible to cut up poultry with one arm in a sling."

"You're right," he assented, "and one feels ten times more clumsy if people are looking on."

The simplicity of the statement touched Philippa, apart from the implied rebuke; she raised her eyes in apologetic sympathy.

They were fine eyes, enhanced by a shade of gentle melancholy. The stranger's answering glance was frankly puzzled and appreciative. Philippa glanced away in vague confusion.

Happily the dog suggested a diversion. She held up the chicken wing bereft of its meat.

"May he have it?" she asked.

The terrier thumped an eager tattoo with his tail on the chair seat. His master responded with a shake of the head.

"Not poultry bones," he said. "They splinter the inside, dear child."

"I beg your pardon?" began Philippa stiffly; a furious blush suffused her cheeks.

"I—I beg yours," responded her companion; "that is, of course, I was speaking to the dog. I've got into the way of talking to him on account of our living alone."

"Oh!" murmured Philippa abashed.

"It's a fool's trick, I know," the other pursued, "but old Scottie is so entirely human. Last week I was blown up in a blasting charge, in the Rockies, and he went miles for help along the rottenest trail. Then I woke to find him slobbering over me like a heart-broken child."

"Hard luck," murmured Philippa softly; her sympathy might have been intended equally well for man or beast.

The stranger took it to himself; he transfixed her with another of his curious glances in which gratitude mingled with naive admiration.

Philippa turned away in sheer embarrassment, and caught up her veil and gloves.

"You're going," he exclaimed, "and I haven't thanked you! Somehow, out West, we mining men learn to think a deal more than we can say."

She flashed him a farewell smile and disappeared.

"Blown up in a blasting charge in the Rockies!"

Speeding to the theatre, she conjured up visions of the man in his mountain fastness. The stage door slammed behind her, shutting out the illimitable distances. She traversed stairs and passages, and gained a door labelled "Chorus Ladies."

Within, several girls, duly rouged and powdered, were putting on the garb of stage peasants. They turned to Philippa simultaneously.

"You'll be late, Flip-Flop," commented an affable blonde. "What happened? Did you lose your way?"

"No," rejoined Philippa. Then she hurriedly laid out her grease paints. At intervals, as she applied them, she smiled a transfiguring smile at her reflection in a jagged square of looking-glass.

The call-boy's fist thundered on the door.

"Overture! Overture!" he yelled. "Beginners, please."

The chorus trooped downstairs after him; Philippa, with the aid of a dresser, scrambled into her peasant frock and rejoined her colleagues on the stage.

They took up their accustomed places whilst a harassed stage manager flung orders to the flies.

The strains of the overture sounded muffled through the curtain. In the middle of a bar came an abrupt change of tune.

"That's the Vice-Regal party arriving," commented a masculine chorister to Philippa.

"Who is arriving?" she echoed eagerly, almost as though her informant might say: "*The mining man from the West!*"

"Why the Governor and his crowd," the youth rejoined prosaically. "Don't you hear the National Anthem?"

"Ah, yes; of course," rejoined Philippa blankly.

The chorus sang their opening number and retired into the wings. The talkative blonde addressed Philippa.

"There's a man with his arm in a sling in one of the boxes. He's watching you Flip-Flop," she said.

Philippa started, despite herself; the blonde turned mischievously to a group of the chorus.

"A one-armed man in the boxes," she reiterated. "Flip-Flop's fate!"

Philippa started up on impulse. "Let me help you," she said. "It's impossible to cut up poultry with one arm in a sling."

The sally was received with stifled giggles, which Philippa pretended not to hear. She withdrew to an isolated corner behind a scene cloth and proceeded to watch the stage.

The prima donna held the centre of the boards — plump, coy, assured, ever so slightly *passé*.

Her voice was her justification; it condoned all trifling affectations once Concordi the insistently youthful merged in Concordi the prima donna, whose mission in life was to sing.

Applause shook the theatre from roof to flies. Philippa thrilled in every nerve, and tears of passionate envy came into her eyes. It was ever her lot thus to wait upon another woman's triumph!

A dozen times the audience recalled Concordi to the footlights; her plump hands encircled a bouquet that had lain on the ledge of the Vice-Regal box; once she smiled and tapped Philippa's shoulder playfully in passing. Nothing escaped her eagle eyes, and her vanity was insatiable. While her admirers in front shrieked themselves hoarse in acclaiming her, she was equally well gratified to have touched a chorus-girl to tears.

"Wake up, Flip-Flop! You're dreaming!"

One of Philippa's colleagues twitched her skirt; the orchestra laboured the bar which signalised the re-entry of the chorus.

With a start Philippa led them down stage, singing the line or two of recitative which fell to her by virtue of her leadership.

She stared strenuously before her into space; her voice had a husky ring that impelled a disapproving stare from the conductor.

A bunch of carnations shot from an upper box to her feet.

Philippa glanced upward in breathless rapture and stooped for the flowers.

"You idiot!" murmured the chorister behind her, "they can't be for you! It's a mistake—he thinks Concordi's coming back again."

"He doesn't!" Philippa flashed back—"they're mine—mine! I shall keep them!"

II.

McMurray lingered in the restaurant, nursing his broken arm and pondering upon Philippa.

His life in isolated mining camps had debarred him from frequent intercourse with womenkind. On the rare occasions when they happened in his path he was constrained and shy, yet withal furtively critical.

The waiter attending his table essayed to be communicative.

"Lady who assisted you just now sings in the Concordi Opera Company, sir," he said.

McMurray pushed back his chair, almost dumbfounded.

From hearsay, he supposed that all actresses were superficially attractive; their calling required it of them. By inverse deduction, it followed that at heart they might be unattractively superficial. His meeting with Philippa gave these theories the lie direct.

Having paused to inquire her name, he limped into the vestibule and studied a poster setting forth the Company's programme for the current week.

His dog nosed patiently about the doorway. McMurray whistled him suddenly and produced a lead. Then he summoned a bell-boy.

"Take my dog to my room," he said, "and shut him in. See he has water, if he wants it. I'll be away all the evening at the theatre. Go on Scottie, old boy—kennel."

The dog drooped his ears disconsolately, and watched his master's exit into the street.

"Come on," said the boy impatiently, pulling at the lead.

"Rats!" hissed the lift attendant, an idle spectator of the incident.

The terrier's ears stiffened promptly.

"He's a sport," commented the bell-boy. "Let's give 'im a chance with the rats in the basement."

The lift-attendant agreed.

The boy greeted McMurray apprehensively on his return, with the news that his dog was in the basement, hunting rats.

"Wouldn't budge when we called 'im, sir," the youth pursued. "And if you was to complain of me to the manager I'd get sacked."

"That's what you deserve," responded McMurray grimly, but his mouth twitched humorously, and he followed the delinquent to the lift.

The attendant winked comprehensively, and they descended to the basement.

"Scottie! Scottie! where are you?" cried McMurray through all-pervading gloom.

The dog leapt towards him instantly in demonstrative joy, knocking a lighted pipe from his hand.

It crashed on to the ground, and the contents scattered.

"Confound you!" murmured the man, while the boy set his heel on the smouldering wad of tobacco, mindful of a notice posted near:

SMOKING PROHIBITED.

Two or three sparks drifted unnoticed towards some litter behind the lift-shaft.

III.

Within an hour of midnight the hotel was a pillar of flame.

The fire generated in the basement leapt up the lift-shaft as through a gigantic chimney; the surrounding stairway caught, and from it the flames gained a hold on every floor. Rivulets of fire ran crackling down the corridors, and cut off retreat by the stairs and lift.

The crowds gathering in the streets watched aghast. They realised that salvation was only to the swift, and that by the emergency stairways clamped to the outer walls of the building.

Men and women crowded shrieking to the windows and dropped upon the balconies; they stumbled and fought their way to the stairheads, pursued by dense volumes of smoke.

Firemen raised hand-ladders to the lower-storey windows, and picked off terrorised individuals clinging inert to the casements. A cry was raised for the aerial escape: that alone could save those in similar plight on the topmost floors.

From the outskirts of the crowd flashed news of a collision brought about by the drunken driver of a market cart—of brief, unavoidable delay.

A woman leapt demented from an upper storey window; another and another followed her, deaf to horrified warnings from the crowd. The ambulance gathered them in, limp and silent, and bore them away.

Half-a-dozen fire engines throbbed and spluttered in the roadway under full steam; endless hose lines cumbered the pavements, and coiled like gigantic snakes to ladders set against the burning building. The torrents of water pumped upward at enormous pressure were as tragically futile as a fusillade from toy squirts. Steam, sparks, ashes, hissed back in the firemen's faces, and the flames burst victorious through the dense smoke.

Philippa, on the topmost floor, awoke from a nightmare of suffocation. Smoke smarted in her eyes and nostrils, sifting in steady streams through an open ventilator above the door. She rushed to the door and opened it, donning a dressing-gown as she went.

Impenetrable smoke filled the corridor, backed by an ominous glow. She beat a hasty retreat to her window; beneath ran a narrow parapet, guarded by a hand-rail. Clear-witted, she divined its communication with an emergency escape.

A muffled shout greeted her as she climbed through the window.

"Wait! Wait! Wait!" roared the crowd in agonised unison. "The ladder escape is coming—will arrive in time!"

Alas for her belated waking! Its significance dawned on her as it dawned on the helpless spectators.

Her path to the emergency stairway was barred by a solid sheet of flame, eating outward from the red-hot core of the building, and along the wall on which she was isolated.

Through a megaphone the Chief of the fire-brigade besought her to keep calm. The ladder escape was coming—would assuredly reach her in time.

She freed herself, groped for the dog and gathered him in her arms, and pointed to the form at her feet.

A fragment of burning wood whizzed suddenly past her eyes like a flaming arrow. As its heat seared her face, dread shrivelled her soul. She cried out in involuntary terror.

The odour of burning varnish stung in her nostrils; another of the few intervening window-frames had caught and flared; the glass fell tinkling on the sill; from the interior sounded the terrified yelping of a dog.

Philippa gave a cry that tore at the heart-strings of the crowd; their reassuring shouts died down in appalled silence. They watched her stumble along the parapet and disappear through a fire-limned window-sash.

"Crazed!" breathed a horror-struck spectator. The verdict echoed in whispers from mouth to mouth. Two or three moments dragged past, spun out to æons of ill-omen.

One of the watchers shrieked and pointed; Philippa reappeared at the casement through which she had seemingly passed for ever from human ken. A towel was knotted across her mouth and nostrils; she tore it away, mechanically, and drank in the scorched outer air.

Next she stooped and raised the body of an unconscious man level with the window sash. Slowly, laboriously, she lowered it upon the parapet. A small white dog leapt after; Philippa followed, and dropped exhausted against the rail.

Concordi, in her zenith, never knew triumph as Philippa knew it then.

Two thousand voices swelled in a palpitating shriek of enthusiasm. Philippa smiled response. It was borne in on her that this was her hour. She gathered herself on the parapet to take the call—a moth become star, the adored of the people, acclaimed, applauded—her paramount prince at her side.

He was hers by every canon of righteousness, snatched from the sacrificial fires. The dog whined pitifully above the man's unconscious form. She cowered down in sudden, chilling reaction to feel for the faintest pulse-beat.

Afar the old, monotonous cry rang up with new, divine significance:

The escape was coming—was actually once more under way—a matter of a few more seconds—a moment at the utmost.

"God," prayed Philippa voicelessly, "let it come in time!"

The crowd shrieked hysterically; the aerial escape, in the wake of three huge white horses, thundered round the corner of the block and halted dead. Its crew leapt to their places; the extension ladder swung upwards to Philippa's balcony; a fireman scaled it before it touched the rail; a second and a third steadied it half-way up.

The topmost man clutched Philippa. She freed herself, groped for the dog and gathered him in her arms, and pointed to the form at her feet.

The fireman leant over and heaved McMurray across the rail.

Stars, suns, lightnings, flashed in her eyes, her brain was whirling, deadly nausea assailed her. Great hands tightened in an iron grip about her, deep breaths played on her face; an aroma of chewing-gum troubled her fleeting consciousness with vapourings of a long-forgotten world.

She sank into oblivion, crushed against a dripping oilskin coat.

IV.

The rescuer and the rescued awoke side by side on the floor of a furnishing emporium, with two doctors in attendance.

The terrier, all blackened and singed, lapped water greedily, then, being denied the faces he fain would lick, slobbered over the bare feet of Philippa, peeping beneath a torn, discoloured wrapper.

"Scottie! Scottie! Come here!" called his master, faint and furious.

"It's all right," murmured Philippa. "I don't mind dogs."

She smiled as she found herself re-echoing the formula which had marked her meeting with McMurray in the lift.

"You!" he cried, and all his heart was in his voice. "They've just been telling me. I'd have been there now but for you. The smoke overcame me before I was properly awake. I tried to make for the window. Poor old Scottie was yelping and pawing at me like fury. I knew he'd never leave me. I hoped we'd suffocate before——"

"Don't! don't!" cried Philippa, tears coursing down her smoke-blackened features.

McMurray reached out and possessed himself of her hand. The doctors tactfully withdrew behind a rampart of carpets and linoleum, and then Philippa was kissed by her Paramount Prince.

A FAVOURITE SPOT.

I know a bank; no mossy green
Is found about the place;
No violets adorn the scene,
No daisy shows its face,
But there my walks I often take
For old associations' sake.

I know a bank; its grassy seat
No maid has shared with me;
It was not there I chanced to meet
My dear Hermione,
But memories fond the spot bedeck;
'Twas there that once I cashed a cheque.

Theta.

THE TRUTH *About* CHRISTMAS

By a Married Woman.

The housewife has rebelled at last! The following outburst by a married woman completely explodes the popular delusion that Christmas is a time of holiday and untroubled mirth. For some people it is; the matron with the cares of a house and family is the wretched exception, and her grievances demand the attention of every fair-minded man and woman.

THERE is no truth in the rumour that a woman—that is to say, a married woman with a husband, a family, and a house to look after—enjoys her Christmas; in the ordinary sense of the word she has no Christmas. True, December the 25th turns up regularly in her life as in everyone else's, but the day brings no balm. It is merely the climax of an exceedingly busy, anxious, and exacting period, during which the luckless matron has played the part of caterer, entertainer, expert buyer, nurse, companion, and what is known in labouring circles as "ganger."

The outpost affairs of Christmas are the puddings and the mincemeat, about which we begin to think towards the end of October. Although these commodities are obtainable in excellent condition from the stores, it is a family fetish that they shall be engineered on the premises. Consequently the thing is done; cook becomes unapproachable for days, the whole routine of the house goes to pieces, meals are mere ghosts and skeletons of their former selves, and everyone grumbles.

But the puddings are made, and boiled, and hung, obese in their straining cloths, on the larder hooks, while jars and jars of mincemeat stand in serried ranks on the shelves. Long before it is eaten we shall all be sick to death of it—mentally, at any rate, if not physically, but Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without . . . etc., so the deed is done.

About this time I dispatch various gifts to friends and relatives abroad. Many of them slipped their moorings in this country years ago, and we have no more idea of what they are like than the man in the moon; we are aware that Cousin George has grown a beard, and Aunt Cissy is a mother of three, but these facts do not assist us in the arid task of choosing suitable offerings. Thus they generally receive a pudding apiece, which is bad for them, as they inhabit the tropics, and the fashionable absurdity of the particular year—perhaps a gold-mounted flint and steel

Friends and relatives abroad usually receive a pudding apiece, for which, if they live in the tropics, they are not likely to be overwhelmingly grateful.

I draw up a list of guests, and cook and I hold solemn conclave over the Christmas catering problem.

to serve as a cigar-lighter, and some species of vanity box respectively.

Previous to achieving these acts of generosity, I have spent unprofitable hours choosing our Christmas card, which we always have printed, in order that it may reach absent friends by December 25th. Every year the designs and letterpress grow more banal and drivelling, but still, needs must, so something gaudy in red and gold, on which the profit is so large that the agent gets 50 per cent. commission, goes forth enshrining "heartiest Christmas Greetings, and All Good Wishes for the New Year from Mr. and Mrs. Dash-Blank and Family." As many as five score waste-paper baskets are enriched thereby, for we have a large circle of friends.

By this time, as you can imagine, the days have flitted by and the festive season looms perilously near. The next point to consider is the constitution of our Christmas party. It is one of the rules of the game that Christmas shall never be enjoyed (Ta-ra-ra-ra—! Hip! Hip!) alone.

"Only numbers can annihilate," said Nelson, so we march in force on the turkey, the obese puddings, and the various gastronomic trimmings. I have already heard that my son Bill wishes to bring Jennings II. back with him, and Alice desires the assistance of Marjorie Smith, her latest bosom friend, during the strain and stress of the holidays. This makes two guests for a start. My husband's people are coming, a sister of mine, and a man provided by Joe—Joe is my husband—to amuse her. We thus arrive at a complement of six guests to be fed and amused, all for a week, and some for longer.

Now, a male mind has no conception of the careful thought necessary if one has to feed six extra mouths in a house whose resources usually cater for two, and three servants. Joe would suggest ordering in a few extra things from the tradespeople, if he did not imagine that eggs and bacon fall from the sky. But even tradespeople enjoy Christmas, and in any case we can't all live on turkey for a week. Hence my tears.

So I draw up a list of guests, with dates of arrival and departure, and cook and I sit in judgment on it. We decide what the joyfully anticipated ones shall eat, and how the fragments of one day shall be used up on the next, and so on. Our home is in the country, and the supply of fresh bread alone is an appalling problem. "It's a long, long way to Tipperary," and it's a long time before cook and I rise from our labours, complete unto the last egg and breadcrumb.

Overturned buckets and Bacchic song are likely to mark the career of a charlady who is lured from her domestic circle at Christmas time.

Of course, Joe would think — you appreciate the way a wife refers to her husband's thoughts as to the ultimate expression of hopeless futility, do you not?—that our regular staff could tackle the extra work entailed by six guests quite at their ease. This is by no means the case. We must arrange for a charlady to come in regularly and take the roughest

work off the housemaid's hands. Have you ever attempted to secure the services of a charlady during Christmas? I assure you that even the humble poor wanton in wassail at this period; even charladies have their Christmas.

If you can seduce one from the charms of her own social circle it is a doubtful question whether she will arrive sober. Overturned buckets and Bacchic song are likely to mark her career. And if ribald strains issue from the kitchen precincts my mother-in-law is sure to suspect that I imbibe in secret, and trace the revelry to my boudoir.

If ribald strains issue from the kitchen my mother-in-law is sure to suspect that I imbibe in secret, and trace the revelry to my boudoir.

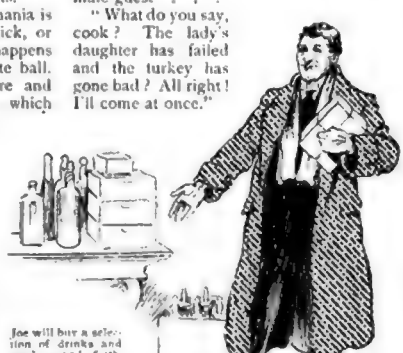
However, someone is at last discovered whose gardener's wife knows a lady whose daughter is not suited at the moment, and who might be tempted to oblige, so we bribe the daughter and proceed to consider the question of presents and entertainments.

Let us tackle presents first. Joe's mania is golf, so I give him another brassiick, or nibbie, or whatever insane thing he happens to lack in order to whack a little white ball. Alice gets one of those lack-lustre and diseased-looking evening frocks for which her immature soul yearns. Bill asks for some mechanical object whose name I forget, but it is written down safely; my sister can always find a use for silk stockings; Joe and I give his people something or other between us which I have to choose, as well as his presents for the children. He will buy a selection of drinks and smokes, and a box of chocolates for me, and then adopt the pose of a Director-General of Supplies, and a "thank-God-I-have-done-my-duty" air.

As for entertainments, the children and Diana (that's my sister) will demand a dance, but Joe's people will want bridge, and Joe's man guest is a motor-lunatic, and likes, garbed in blue dungaree, to eviscerate his gear-box all the weary day. So, being a married woman at Christmas, no doubt I shall be able, with a wave of my lily hand, to co-ordinate and harmonise their various amusements, satisfying everyone, and also providing fine weather suitable for Joe's golf.

And I, you may ask of your politeness, what do I want to do? Well, I want a quiet hour with Joe over the fire, and I want to lash out of Alice an irritating artistic pose she has seen fit to adopt lately, and get Bill to tell me absolutely everything he has done and thought all last term (I think I see him obliging me!). And I want, also, now and again, to forget all my various jobs and flirt a little with Mr. Thompson-Johnson, my esteemed husband's male guest . . .

"What do you say, cook? The lady's daughter has failed and the turkey has gone bad? All right! I'll come at once."



Joe will buy a selection of drinks and smokes, and forthwith assume a "thank-God-I-have-done-my-duty" air

THE CAPTAIN'S TÊTE À TÊTE

BY FRANK E VERNEY

A Story of the Days Before the War.

At the Mess entrance Captain O'Dare found a long, low, covered car awaiting him.

A big footman in a dark livery carefully opened and closed the car door, and with a stiff salute swung himself beside the seated chauffeur.

As the car moved silently forward O'Dare fumbled for the electric light switch which he felt certain would be fitted in such a luxurious interior.

His fingers found it, but it was apparently out of order. He struck a match and lit a cigarette. It occurred to him that had his charming hostess come with her car, he would have been very pleased to remain in the dark.

As it was, the faulty switch annoyed him vaguely. It offended his sense of proportion. Two attendants to one car should be equal to keeping the fitments in order. He endeavoured ineffectually to release one of the side-blinds. He tried another; that also refused to be released.

He laughed. After all, it was unimportant; he did not particularly want to look at the passing street lamps. He was going to dine alone with the beautiful Countess Flora Von Semlen and incidentally watch her wonderful eyes light up as he explained to her his famous invention. He supposed that the law of attraction of opposites was responsible for the fascinated interest of a woman, beautiful, tender, and gentle, in the ugly, merciless strength of his engine of destruction.

There was very little to show. It was all upon a sheet of oiled silk that rolled up into the size of a ·303 cartridge. But still she wanted to look upon the actual tangibility of the world's new war horror, and it was pleasant to gratify her wish. His soldiering life had been spent for the greater part in circumstances where the whine of a hostile bullet was infinitely more usual than the silken swish of a woman's skirt; and strong in him flourished the chivalry of the soldier man who has not to meet the opposite sex in professional competition or any relation where tender courtesy is not stimulated.

O'Dare smiled pleasurably as he heard in imagination the Countess' tender voice with its faint, fascinating accent. She was very adorable and sweet. Ah! it was really good to be home in the old country in the society of women like Flora. She had been very charming to him in London. It was kind of her to keep her promise to see him during her brief visit to Portsmouth.

He had been very delighted to meet her at tea that afternoon on board the fêted German battleship in the harbour. He had been still more delighted at the invitation she had given him for dinner. The laughing secret she had made of the locality of the rendezvous had added a piquancy to an attractive event.

He wondered vaguely where her friend's house could be, and how it was she had been able to arrange a *tête à tête* meal with him. It was exquisitely unconventional and original.

His reflections were cut short by the gradual slowing down of the car and a swerve into a gravel drive. In a minute it

stopped. Immediately the tall footman was at the car door assisting him with assiduous politeness to alight on to the wide stone step of a lighted vestibule.

Inside the capacious hall two more stiff-jointed, liveried men-servants relieved him of his outer garments.

It occurred casually to O'Dare as the elder servant received his cap that the man's face was unusually spare and clean-muscled for a flunkey's. It was quite lacking in the customary soft pale roundness of an easy-going, over-fed indoor servant. It is probable that the man's appearance would have failed to arouse O'Dare's further interest but for a peculiar scar on the hand which held the cap. It was a dark, triangular indentation at the back of the lean wrist.

O'Dare straightened his tie with care.

"Bayonets," he said conversationally, "are uncomfortable things. What?"

The man with the scarred hand turned and placed O'Dare's blue dress cap upon a table in the manner of one accustomed to handle such headgear. Then he swung round on his right heel.

"Pardon, sir?" he answered uncomprehendingly.

"It's immaterial," drawled O'Dare. "Which way?"

"This way, sir," answered the man promptly.

"Now, why on earth should that fellow make a mystery of himself?" was O'Dare's mental query as he followed his reticent guide to a wide door at the far end of the hall. It opened on a pair of heavy, baize-padded doors. The butler held one open for O'Dare to pass through.

The Countess Flora rose to greet him. The beauty of her deep golden hair flamed wonderfully against the dark oak panelling as she moved forward.

Her smile was exquisitely tender to O'Dare.

He bowed over her hand and she led him to a great, low-seated settee that flanked one side of the blazing fire.

With fascinating grace she stood and surveyed her companion with alluring eyes, as he waited, slim and immaculate in his mess kit, for her to be seated.

"*Ach*, tell me," she said softly, "why you English officers do not wear always your uniform?"

"For you," he answered with smiling ardour, "we would wear anything; but I was just wondering if you would forgive me for wearing it. I wanted to escort you direct to the dance on the *Kronprinz*, if you will allow me."

"*If* I will allow you!" she repeated with charming emphasis. "Why, of course—but not if you have forgotten to bring me your terrible machine to look at," she added archly.

"I should never forget a request of yours," answered O'Dare, with a glance that brought a flush to her beautiful cheeks.

"Then you have it here with you—actually with you," she cried with pretty eagerness.

O'Dare smiled. It really was good to be in civilisation again.

"I'm afraid," he said, "you'll be frightfully disappointed."

"What!" she exclaimed, "you have not brought it after all?"

Her dismay at the possibility of not seeing his instrument of human annihilation was fascinatingly incongruous

"Of course I've brought it, but there is so little to look at," he explained, as he took out his cigar case; "it will convey nothing to you, as I told you in London; just a bit of paper with any amount of figures and things and a little sketch like a wire puzzle."

"*Ach!*" she exclaimed, with a fascinating shudder, "but think what the piece of paper can do. I am what you call morbid, am I not?"

"You are what I should call—heavenly," murmured O'Dare.

The Countess laughed. There was a strained note in her silvery tones.

"It is reckless of you to carry about with you so terrible a secret," she said in an odd tone. "I ought not to have asked you."

O'Dare laughed amiably and rose to his feet. "I've been told so," he said; "but I'm afraid I don't do it very openly."

"Is it in that?" she asked, staring at the case in his hand, and rising to get a better view.

For answer he extracted a cigar, deftly shifted the band, and with a swift twist of his fingers disclosed to her intensely interested gaze the fact that the cigar was really a skilfully constructed dummy, containing a short, thin roll of oiled silk.

The hand she placed upon his arm was trembling.

"How remarkably ingenious," she cried. "It would never be suspected."

"It is sufficiently valuable—and dangerous to require an ingenious hiding-place," answered O'Dare smilingly.

"*Ach!*" she exclaimed, with a sudden change of manner. "Don't show me any more. After, perhaps——"

O'Dare covered her hand reassuringly with his disengaged one.

"I was forgetting," she said quickly, almost breathlessly, "that I must not monopolise you yet."

"Please go on forgetting," he begged with smiling earnestness. "Sit down again and tell me by what magic you have arranged this delightful honour for me."

She looked at him for a moment, and O'Dare saw in her deep blue eyes an expression which subtly disturbed and puzzled him. And then she turned quickly and bent across the end of the settee to a small bell-push set in the side of the fireplace.

O'Dare watched the delicate forefinger on the ivory button. His professional instinct of detailed observation reasserted itself.

The pink tinted oval nail of the pressing finger had reddened deeply three times. He heard no answering bell, but he knew that it had rung thrice.

"If it's not a rude question," he asked gaily, "what do three rings stand for? In whistles, it's one for a taxi, two for a hansom, and three for a growler."

Almost before she could reply the doors opened and three men in evening dress walked into the room, followed by a footman bearing a tray of *aperatifs*.

"Kind of electric Jack-in-the-Box," murmered O'Dare in whimsical answer to his own question.

The Countess laughed involuntarily, O'Dare glanced at her quickly. Her laugh had a queer ring in it. Under the influence of something strained in the atmosphere O'Dare's senses were quickening into that abnormal super-alertness common to men who take their lives into the lawless wilderness.

His sleepy blue eyes passed with perceptive but imperceptible keenness over the newcomers as the Countess introduced them. Of the formal words he caught only the word "Count," applied to the tallest man.

His long, squared-jawed head, with clean-shaven face, seemed faintly familiar to O'Dare. Unlike the other two men, he did not shake hands but simply bowed, and his right hand remained in his trouser pocket.

"Haven't I had the pleasure of meeting you before, Count?" asked O'Dare.

"I think not. I have no recollection of the occasion," answered the Count suavely, in a voice that had the same faint accent as the Countess Flora's.

"Where," asked the Countess quickly, "did you think you had met?"

"The newspapers," interposed the Count deftly, "have left few people unacquainted with Captain O'Dare—and his invention."

"That," returned O'Dare drily, "is a malady they will outgrow when I return to my obscurity."

The Countess was examining a bejewelled dial set in a dainty wrist ornament.

"You will pardon me?" she asked O'Dare hastily. "Count, will you please open the door?"

O'Dare moved forward a trifle quicker than the Count, but the other two men, apparently with the same chivalrous motive, sprang simultaneously and collided with O'Dare. As they stood with their backs to the door profusely apologising to the Englishman in a language he recognised but did not understand, the Countess exchanged a few hurried words with her courteous cavalier who was holding open the door for her.

The Count came back into the room.

"The Countess" he said, with a polite smile, "desires us to amuse each other for a quarter-of-an-hour."

"In that case," observed O'Dare pleasantly, "we must endeavour to do so. I suppose," he added conversationally as he went and stood before the fire, "you will be attending the dance on board your cruiser to night?"

"It is possible," answered the Count. "I must say," he added courteously with an explanatory wave to the two friends who were seating themselves on the settee, "that the onus of the amusement which the Countess referred to will rest with you and me, unless you speak German."

"Ah!" drawled O'Dare, "I'm afraid your language is too much for me." He sat down on the upholstered rail of the lounge fender and stretched his legs to ease the drag of his mess overalls. The two foreigners appeared to be interested in the glittering silver medal that swung from the soldier's jacket flap.

Beneath his half-lidded eyes O'Dare watched the Count take his seat on the arm of the settee. So far there seemed nothing tangible to justify the officer's growing disquiet.

"Captain O'Dare," said the Count, as he steadied himself on his perch by placing his right heel on the seat of the settee, "if the inquiry is not presumptuous, are your newspapers correct in saying that your Government has refused to 'take up' your wonderful Arm?"

O'Dare thought for a moment. After all, there was no reason why he should not talk

He extracted a cigar, deftly shifted the band, and with a swift twist of his fingers disclosed to her intensely interested gaze the fact that the cigar was really a skilfully constructed dummy, containing a short, thin roll of oiled silk. (*Page 361, col 2.*)

O'Dare suddenly bent to the great fire and thrust the cigar into the heart of the glowing cinders.

of the thing that Europe's journals had blazoned all over the civilised world.

"I haven't read the newspapers on the subject," he answered easily, "but they know, I believe, all that is to be known on the subject."

It seemed to O'Dare that the footman at the small table near the door had stopped tinkering with his glasses to listen to the reply.

"Ah!" ejaculated the Count, "it was almost unbelievable, but then, of course your humanitarian Cabinet——"

At that moment the man sitting at the outer edge of the Count's perch found the heat of the blazing fire a little uncomfortable. He put his feet against the fender and pushed gently. The settee screwed round a foot on its castors, and the Count's hand came automatically from his pocket to the couch back to preserve his balance.

O'Dare's blue eyes flickered suddenly. Upon the wrist-base of the outstretched hand frowned plainly the triangular indented scar of an old bayonet wound—a scar identical with that on the right wrist of the reserved butler who had taken his hat in the outer hall.

The Count's hand went back to its hiding place, and his lean lips moved again over his even white teeth.

"For your Army Council to allow a device like yours to pass out of their hands is the blindest, most suicidal act in the history of your country," pursued the Count. "Merely as a weapon for the preservation of universal peace its value is inestimable."

O'Dare nodded and appeared interested only in the toes of his mess boots.

"And its inventor," pursued the Count with emphasis, "would be fully justified in disposing of it elsewhere."

"Your views," drawled O'Dare coolly, "are interesting."

"I would venture to guarantee," persisted the Count, speaking slowly and distinctly, "that a certain Government would willingly give one—two—any millions or anything—for a copy of its details."

O'Dare felt that the eyes of the other men were upon him, awaiting his answer with interest.

"Ah! very likely," he commented with an admirably simulated yawn, "very generous of them an' all that, but as a matter of fact it's a silly idea of theirs—even supposing the British Government hadn't held on to the drawings."

The Count smiled grimly.

"Captain O'Dare," he said softly and distinctly, "*I wonder if I might trouble you for a cigar.*"

For a full half minute O'Dare looked him steadily in his narrowed black eyes. The footman by the door and the two other men on the settee watched him intently.

O'Dare's glance veered swiftly to the lights. They were in two clusters, one high above his head, and the other at the far end of the room near the shuttered windows, both out of reach of a smashing poker.

"Captain O'Dare," said the Count, "it might save time—and—vain sacrifice—if I explain the situation. The Countess——"

O'Dare interrupted. "We will leave the lady's name out of the discussion," he said calmly, "but you can 'carry on' with the situation."

The Count inclined his head courteously, and then his manner changed.

"Captain O'Dare," he said, "I imagine you have by now gathered our special interest in your invention. What may not be so clear to you is the fact that it is the intention of myself and my friends that it shall change ownership."

For a half minute there was no other sound than heavy breathing.

"Supposing for the sake of argument," observed O'Dare, "that my intention clashes with yours?"

"That," answered the Count politely, "will be unfortunate." He looked round. "I believe there are four automatic pistols in the room."

Under the battery of keenly watching eyes O'Dare's brow wrinkled indecisively.

"What guarantee have I," he asked uncertainly, "that you will not use one of these instruments—in any case—for your own safety?"

The Count laughed reassuringly and with slight relief.

"Your silence—or speech—is immaterial in any circumstances. We are not acting as individuals. Your unsupported statement could be contradicted by the sworn alibi of our gunboat staff if necessary."

He spoke with careful emphasis, and waited while the soldier took in the situation.

"Ah!" said O'Dare at length. "It seems that the position is entirely with you. One must recognise the inevitable."

In a silence that was only broken by the fall of the heaped up cinders of the great glowing fire, O'Dare took out his cigar case.

Very deliberately he lifted out one cigar with the thumb and forefinger of his left hand. He examined it carefully and then looked up.

The Count slid from his position on the settee arm, stepped forward, and stretched out his hand.

"I am glad," he said, "that you *do* recognise the inevitable."

Then with a lightning motion that took everyone by surprise O'Dare suddenly bent to the great fire and thrust the cigar into the heart of the glowing cinders, and with a sharp blow of his bare hand knocked in the heaped up sides of the hollow furnace.

With a tremendous rush the Count sprang upon O'Dare and thrust him aside. O'Dare swerved quickly and caught the Count round the waist and rolled him on to the two men, who were rising from the settee.

The footman rushed forward with a raised bottle.

"Never mind him," shouted the Count desperately, "the fire." The settee suddenly overturned with the weight of the three men struggling across its back.

The Count scrambled to his feet and rushed to the fire followed by one of the others. The fourth man lay on the floor. O'Dare's elbow had struck him under the jaw.

O'Dare got up from the carpet straightening his attire. He bent and picked up his cigar case and its scattered contents.

He placed one cigar in his mouth and the other two in his case.

"Count," he said genially, to his opponent's bending back, "I'm afraid your salvage corps is too late."

In a minute or so, the Count and his companions realised the fact. They dropped the fire-irons with which they had been vainly raking. For a long minute they stared speechlessly at the nonchalant soldier.

"Captain O'Dare," said the Count slowly, "it seems that I made the unfortunate error of under-rating you."

"That," answered O'Dare mildly, "has been done before—and now," he added, "if you have no objection I propose going and getting my hand dressed—it's rather painful."

Under his sleepy eyelids he was watching the Count's face with keen alertness, and wondering breathlessly if he had spoken with sufficient casualness.

There was another long pause, and then the Count stepped forward.

"Before you go," he said quietly, "you must give me the other cigars as a keepsake."

O'Dare returned his glance without a tremor.

"Help yourself," he agreed easily, holding out the case, "and if you have a match, give me a light."

The Count, with characteristic courtesy, took out his matchbox and struck a match.

He held it gracefully to the end of O'Dare's cigar.

O'Dare inhaled and blew out a stream of fragrant smoke.

That O'Dare was committing the solecism of smoking his cigar with the hand on did not occasion remark.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, "that's better."

The Count extracted the other cigars from the case, and with a quick movement broke them with his fingers.

"There was just a chance," he said politely, "that you had made a mistake. As a good soldier I had to be sure."

And then he strode over to the door and O'Dare followed him. The others watched in silence with never a movement.

As the heavy door swung behind him O'Dare's blood began to course rapidly through his veins.

The Count helped him on with his coat in complete silence. There seemed no need for any further speech. The whole thing had been enacted in the most extraordinary, matter-of-fact way and with the most surprising *sang-froid*.

The Count swung open the heavy outer door and O'Dare heard the hoot of a taxi on the night air. He stood near the top of the shallow steps and turned to the Count, still with his cigar in his mouth.

The Count suddenly noticed that O'Dare's cigar was not burning, and he took out his matches again.

"Let me give you another light," he said; "your cigar is out."

O'Dare edged nearer the steps, his heart thundering a rataplan.

"Don't bother," he said; "a relit cigar is not worth smoking." His tone was queer in spite of his tremendous effort to keep it normal.

The Count started suddenly, and his hand flew to his pocket. "*Gott!*" he cried, "you——"

O'Dare's burnt fist caught him on the point of the chin and tumbled him back violently with a sudden dull thud into the deserted vestibule.

And then O'Dare turned, and took the steps in one leap.

An hour later his brother-officer Campbell found him in his room at the barracks. He was handling a cigar as well as he could with a bandaged hand.

"What on earth have you been up to?" asked Campbell in astonishment. "I thought you were dining with one of your goddesses."

"So did I," answered O'Dare. "Do you mind just holding one end of this cigar?"

Campbell obeyed. The cigar came in two pieces, and a tiny roll of oiled silk fell out.

"That," commented Campbell, "is very ingenious."

He examined the hollow tube running through the centre and the slender quill jutting out of the one half.

"Why," he said, "it's the real thing at the ends."

"It was just real enough," remarked O'Dare grimly.

'WARE WOOL.

In the dim, seductive twilight, ere the rosy lamps were lit,
I used to sit with Daisy, sometimes flirt with her a bit;
But the times are sadly altered; now she's knitting night and day,
For she's busy making mufflers — khaki, navy-blue, and grey.

All my tenderest endearments are addressed to her in vain,
For she only smiles serenely, and responds: "Two purl, one plain!"
But the climax came this evening — all her love for me had fled!—
When I tried to hold her hand, she murmured: "Hold my wool instead!"

Rosemary North.

IN SPLENDID SPIRITS.

Sandy McDougal was employed at the local distillery, and had had a narrow escape from drowning in a vat of whisky. Taking a walk one day after his discharge from hospital, he met a friend, who inquired after his health, and added: "You must have felt very funny, Sandy, when you found yourself in the whisky."

"Not I," replied Sandy; "I was in the very best o' spirits!"

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A SUBTLE DISTINCTION.

Little Ethel: "Mother, are you the nearest relative I've got?"

Mother (who has just been refused a new hat): "Yes, dear, and your pa is the closest relative you've got."

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A MUTUAL ARRANGEMENT.

A fashionable lady had engaged a Chinese cook. She ordered him to be sent up to her, and when he appeared she asked his name.

"Wang Hang Ho," replied the Chinaman.

"Dear me!" said the lady, "I cannot remember all that. I shall call you Johnny."

"What's your name?" asked the cook.

"My name," replied the mistress, "is Mrs. Fitzgerald Carruthers."

"Me no remember all that," said the Chinaman, his features relaxing for two seconds. "Me callee you Tommy!"

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ALL ALONE!

Countryman (looking at a well-known picture): "'Vandyke, by Himself.' What a silly thing to put; any fool could see that there is no one with him."

A VALUABLE BOOK.

"Would you oblige me," said the reporter who [illegible] novel interviews, "by telling [illegible] book has helped you most in life?"

And after a thoughtful pause the great man answered: "My bank book."

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TOO MUCH TO EXPECT.

Gilded Youth: "Don't you think that after a girl has been taken out to dinner and the theatre, and given chocolates and ices, she might let a fellow kiss her good-night?"

Crusty Bachelor: "Humph! I should think he'd done quite enough for her."

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JIM AND JAM.

Jim went to fetch some raspberry jam
For his little cousin Sam;
He jambed his thumb in the cupboard-door—
'Twas not the jam he bargained for!

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A LOST TITLE.

Mistress (angrily): "How dare you talk to me in that way? I never heard such impudence. You have a lot of nerve to call yourself a lady's maid."

New Maid: "I don't call myself that now, ma'am, but I was a lady's maid before I got this job."

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STRAINED RELATIONS.

"Our friend Mrs. Jones has gone crazy on the subject of germs," remarked one neighbour to another.

"She sterilises or filters everything in the house."

"How does she get along with her family?"

"Well, I can assure you that even her relations are strained!"

BRITANNIA (choosing her winter millinery): "They're all so charming I shall have to keep the lot."

THE SARTORIAL YEAR.

January.

Look at these feeble effeminate males,
Not one of 'em dares to turn up at the sales.
SHE flocks there in thousands, much keener than mustard.
HE skulks in the background, the cowardly custard!

February.

When the Nut goes out to the great Cup Tie he wears a pea-green cap,
Set slightly upon one side to show that he doesn't care a—rap.
And a tie the colours of *his* pet team, to show 'em he's standing by.
If there weren't so many exactly the same, no doubt he would catch the eye;
But nuts on a tree aren't more alike than Nuts at a great Cup Tie.

March.

The other chap's hat blew into the sea,
While I stood and laughed; it was funny for me.

April.

Look at these nice new openwork blouses,
Fit for the hottest of Kew palm houses.
They must come out at Easter because they are new,
And it's snowing and blowing and freezing, too.

May.

Trust her not, she's fooling thee,
Madame A or Madame B,
With that most alluring gown
(Sort of super-resch-me-down);
On the pretty mannequin,
Who is very tall and thin,
You are nicely covered—you are short;
Very well; You're fairly caught
(Madame smiles to see the sport).

June.

Pa bought a beautiful Panama hat,
Two guineas it cost him, think of that!
Perhaps it was worth it, it looks very nice,
But he never can wear it because of the price.
For oh! but there would be the dickens to pay
With a two-guinea Panama on a wet day
(And you never can tell what the weather will be,
If it's shining at breakfast, it's raining at tea).
But so long as Pa's wearing his shabby old cap, he
Is quite independent and therefore quite happy.

July.

When men go a-swimming they do not wear much,
But a girl wears a bonnet and thinks it looks Dutch.
I don't say it isn't a nice little bonnet,
But look at it after a wave's sat upon it!

August.

A holiday is a dismal sham if your clothes are fit to be seen
For how can anyone let themselves go if they have to keep themselves clean?
Come out, unspeakable old tweed suit, beloved and ancient skirt,
That which is shrunk need fear no rain, that which is torn no hurt;
Come out with me to the hills and the sea, and collect a little more dirt!

September.

He had got his shooting togs,
He had got two spaniel dogs;
He was standing on the station
Wallowing in admiration,
Cynosure of every eye . . .
Till there came a sudden cry:
"James, hi, James! Where is the man?
Put them in the luggage van!"

October.

The lady is under the spell of the spat,
If only she knew that her feet looked like that!

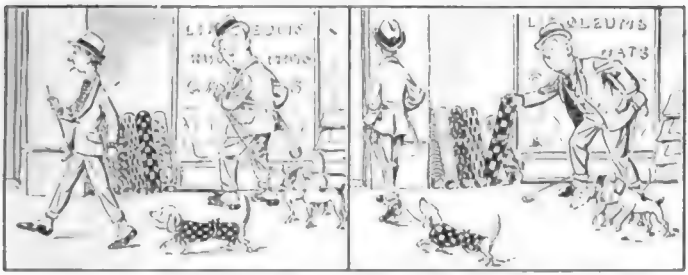
November.

"Guy, Guy, Guy!"
Hear the urchins cry!
Friend, why do you start
With a beating heart
And blush like anything?
Does your conscience sting?
"Guy, Guy, Guy!"
Is it you or I?

December.

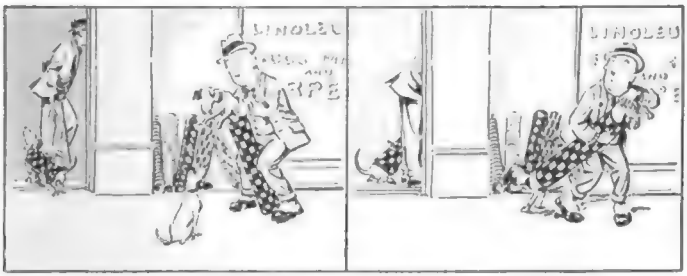
You are dressed up in that fancy dress
For your own enjoyment and happiness:
You are togged up like an Ancient Knight
For your own irrational, deep delight.
And you said "You would do it to please the kid!"
Oh, you fibber, you know you did!

T. O'Meara



1. Fritz Von Fiddlesticks, with true German arrogance, is furious at seeing his dogs outdone by his neighbour's Dachshund.

2. With touching confidence in his nation's right to take anything it wants, he loots a roll of oilcloth——



3. ——and, since he cannot have the genuine article, proceeds to make a cheap imitation.

4. In spite of the terriers' resentment at being parties to a German conspiracy, they are forced into it——

NO ESCAPE.

"Is that new sentry vigilant?"

"I should say so. Why, someone told him the gas was escaping, and he grabbed his rifle."

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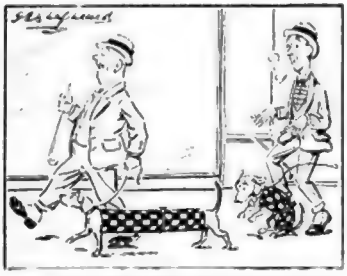
MORE TO THE POINT.

The young couple had just moved into a new house and they stood surveying the situation.

"I wish," said she, "that this carpet was velvet."

"I don't," responded the husband unfeelingly. "I wish it was down."



5. ——and their master departs happy in the belief that he has scored another German victory.

HER SPECIAL CHOICE.

"I wouldn't cry like that if I were you," said a lady to little Alice.

"Well," said Alice, between her sobs, "you can cry any way you like, but this is my way."

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UNAVAILING CAUTION.

VISITOR: "My husband considered a very long time before he proposed to me. He was very careful."

HOSTESS: "Ah, it is always those careful people who get taken in!"

A RECORD REVENUE CUTTER.

Two naval officers were talking in nautical terms about their wives.

"What a dear little craft your wife is!" said the first.

"'Dear and little,' did you say? She is 'dear' all right, but there's nothing 'little' about her. Why she is the biggest revenue cutter I have ever seen!"

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ANOTHER QUALIFICATION.

The meeting which had been called to support the candidature of the gentleman who thirsted to represent the constituency in Parliament was getting uproarious, not to say personal.

"Shut up!" cried a free and independent elector to the candidate, who had been modestly blowing his own trumpet. "You haven't a leg to stand on!"

"All the more reason why I should have the seat," was the happy retort.

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A COMMON FEAT.

BAXTER: "You have heard of a man cutting off his nose to spite his face?"

YARDLEY: "Yes, but I have never seen it done. I have known a man kick one of his hands out of doors, though."

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CROWDED OUT!

"I wish, Henry," said the editor's wife, "that you'd try not to be so absent-minded when you are dining out."

"Eh? What have I done now?"

"Why, when the hostess asked you if you'd have some more pudding, you replied, that owing to the tremendous pressure on your space, you were compelled to decline."

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NO NEED TO BE CRUSTY.

As the Christmas holidays drew nearer, little Ronald, his mind full of the gorgeous feasts to come, took a most violent dislike to crusts. He nibbled out the crumb of the bread and butter, and surreptitiously disposed of the objectionable portion.

When mother found it out, there was a short, sharp altercation.

"You wasteful young rascal!" she concluded, "you'll want those crusts some day."

"Course I shall," said the little fellow diplomatically. "That's what I'm saving 'em up for."

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

FOND MOTHER (in strident tones): "Lily! Lily!"

FREE ILLUMINATION.

"What's the difference between electricity and lightning?" asked a little girl of her brother.

"You don't have to pay for lightning," her brother replied.

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OPEN TO PERSUASION.

A witty Irishman was once invited to a large dinner party in Dublin in the hope that he would amuse and divert his host's guests. But from the beginning to the end of the dinner he preserved a solemn and serious face. The host thought this very strange.

"Why, old fellow," he remarked, "I don't believe the biggest fool in Ireland could make you laugh to-night."

"Try," was the wit's cutting rejoinder.

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QUELLING CURIOSITY.

Jones came up to town one morning with a bruised and swollen forehead. His friend Briggs showed considerable curiosity as to the cause of the injury.

"How did it happen, old man?" he asked.

"Collided with the hat-rack last night," said Jones, shortly.

"Accidentally?" asked Briggs.

"No, Briggs," replied Jones sweetly. "I have every reason to suspect that it attacked me purposely!"

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A GOOD STAYER.

"Like most men," he said, "I have my shortcomings, I suppose, but——"

"Oh, it isn't your shortcomings my father objects to," interrupted the girl. "It's your long stayings."

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THE VITAL DIFFERENCE.

LITTLE TOMMY: "Dad, is there any difference between genius and talent?"

FATHER (emphatically): "There is, my boy. Talent gets paid every Saturday."

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A PRESSING AFFAIR.

"Why, how crumpled your blouse is, Edith."

"Dear me! And it has only just been pressed, too."

Edith was just as self-possessed as ever. But Cecil coloured deeply.

VENTILATION NEEDED.

COMPOSER: "What do you think of my new song?"

CRITIC: "It needs ventilating."

COMPOSER: "Needs ventilating?"

CRITIC: "Yes, the air is bad."

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IMPRESSIONISM.

A painter of the "impressionist" school is now confined in a lunatic asylum. To all persons who visit his studio he says: "Look here, this is the latest masterpiece of my composition." They look, and see nothing but an expanse of bare canvas. They ask: "What does that represent?"

"That? Why, that represents the passage of the Jews through the Red Sea."

"Excuse me, but where is the sea?"

"It has been driven back."

"And where are the Jews?"

"They have crossed over."

"And the Egyptians?"

"Will be here directly. That's the sort of painting I like; simple, suggestive, and unpretentious."

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A BROAD HINT.

VISITOR: "Is your clock right?"

TIRED HOSTESS (at the end of her patience and politeness): "Oh, no! Thats the one we call 'The Visitor.'"

VISITOR: "What a quaint name. Why?"

HOSTESS: "Because it doesn't go."

THE ROYAL MAGAZINE.

THREE HEROES simultaneously): "Pray take my seat, madam."
Mrs. BIGGS: "Oh, thank you, gents, two'll be quite sufficient."

TRY YOUR TEMPER!

GRUMBLES (to pier attendant): "Look here, my man! That machine is to try your weight, the next your height, the next your strength, then your sight. And now I've put a penny in this thing, but I don't see what it's for. I've had nothing back!"

PIER ATTENDANT: "Oh, that sir! Well that one is to try your temper."

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LOOKING FOR TROUBLE.

"Sir, I can't find it," said the amateur fireman who was looking for a fire in a farmyard, to which the village brigade had been summoned.

"You can't find what?" asked the captain.

"The fire," replied the fireman.

"Then go and strike a light and look for it, but don't keep poking about in the dark in that foolish way," said the captain, conscious of his importance.

BIG BOY (whose father owns field): "Are you goin' to let us 'ave a go, Bill?"
THE SLEDGE-OWNER: "No!"
BIG BOY: "Then get off our blooming snow see."

RAIKES OF THE RESERVE.

Whose Conduct was in Keeping with the Best Traditions of the Service.

By T. C. Bridges.

It was two o'clock on a dull afternoon in early autumn when an agitated principal warder brought to the Governor of Moorlands Prison the news that the leat had stopped flowing.

The leat is the little aqueduct which brings its supply of fresh spring water from the high moor to the prison. It runs in long curves around the hill sides, and is seldom blocked except by heavy snow.

The news was serious. The population of the prison is equal to that of a small town, and to have such a number of people left without a drop of water was no joke.

A little later, word came that the stoppage had been caused by a landslip on the side of Gray Tor, and a large party, consisting of sixty men under the charge of six warders and a couple of civil guards, was hurried out to clear the channel.

If the accident proved a source of worry to the prison authorities, the case was different with the prisoners. Any little change in the deadly monotony of prison routine is welcome to a convict, and the idea of going a mile and more beyond the boundaries of the prison farm was hailed with delight by the chosen men, by none more so than Peter Raikes.

Raikes was a sailor, and before his imprisonment had been entitled to add the letters R.N.R. after his name. For five years in succession he had done his annual training with the Naval Reserve. He was a good sailor, but a hot-tempered man, and it was temper—that and a girl—which had brought him to his present pass.

In a moment of passion he had killed a rival, and as the so-called "unwritten law" goes for little with a British judge and jury, the result had been a verdict of manslaughter and a sentence of seven years' penal servitude.

To a man like Raikes prison was hell. Sometimes he felt as though the endless routine, the drab sameness of each succeeding day would drive him mad. Yet the mere fact that he was chosen to be one of the present party was proof that his conduct had been practically perfect. A chief warder takes no unnecessary risks in picking men for such exceptional duty.

The men marched off in good spirits. It was not only the novelty of working among new surroundings that pleased them; they knew, too, that when the job was done there was a treat in store for each in the shape of an extra ration of cheese for supper.

Gray Tor was a great lump of a hill crowned by a fantastically shaped mass of weather-worn granite. The leat wound riband-like across its vast flank at a height

of some two hundred feet above the valley below. It was a channel not more than four or five feet wide with about a foot of swiftly-running water at the bottom.

Long before they reached the scene of the accident, the damage was plain to see, for beneath a great brown scar in the steepest part of the hillside a foaming torrent cascaded down the slope.

Principal Warder Drysdale commanded the party. His face lengthened as he realised the extent of the damage. For a distance of nearly a hundred feet the leat channel was entirely blocked with a packed mass of peaty earth, gravel, and boulders, and the bank on the lower side had collapsed in half-a-dozen different places. It was already nearly three, and he doubted whether even with the force at his command the job could be finished before dusk.

He lost no time in getting the men to work, and soon the earth was flying all along the line of the fall. Raikes, always a good worker, went at it with a will, and plied his spade with the best.

He had been shovelling hard for about an hour when a spot of rain on his face made him glance up. It had been hazy all day, but now the haze had thickened to a level pall of cloud which covered the whole sky. His sailor-like knowledge of weather told him that they were in for a wet night.

He noticed, too, that Drysdale had an anxious eye on the heavens. It would be awkward for him if fog came down, with all these men out on the open moor far away from the prison, and beyond the reach of telephones or watch-towers. However, there was no sign of mist at present, and as the warder said nothing, Raikes saw that he was evidently determined to try to finish the job.

The rain fell in a sharpish shower, but presently stopped again. The sky, however, did not clear, and in the west looked thicker than ever.

Half-past four came, the usual hour for stopping work, but there was plenty still to do before the water would run down its own channel. Raikes was wiring in for all he was worth when a low rumbling sound made him look up again, under the impression that it was thunder.

That glance—that and his sailor-like smartness—saved his life. He had just time to leap out of the leat and dash a few yards to one side before a roaring wave of earth and rocks came rolling down upon the very spot where he had been standing. It was another land-slide nearly as heavy as the first.

Quick as he was, he did not escape altogether. A fragment of rock, bounding sideways, struck him in the chest, bowled him over, and sent him rolling away down the steep, heather-clad slope below the leat.

For a moment he felt half stunned. When he came to himself he was lying thirty yards down the hillside in a thick tuft of heather. His head sang, and the breath had been knocked out of his body, but otherwise he was none the worse.

The roar of the land-slide ceased, but piteous groans and shrieks came from above, and he saw the warders rushing to the spot. It was clear that several men had been badly hurt.

Raikes' first impulse was to go and help. Then, in the very act of scrambling to his feet, it came to him that no one was watching him, and that there was not a soul between him and the open moor.

Moreover, only a few paces below him, grew a patch of thick gorse.

If ever there was a Heaven-sent opportunity of escape, here it lay before him, and it was not in human nature—not in Peter Raikes' nature at any rate—to refuse it.

Almost before he knew that he had made up his mind to take it, he found himself in the gorse. In the space of a moment, his whole frame of mind had changed. He was no longer a rule-abiding convict, doing all he knew to gain full marks and full remission. He was a wild creature skulking like a fox in and out between the tough, twisted gorse stems.

He moved with astonishing speed and certainty. Again his sailor's training stood him in good stead. His plans for the future were nothing. His whole energies were concentrated on putting as much space as possible between himself and his late companions.

Beyond the gorse was a space of open ground, and then, a little way off, a tumble of grey boulders humping their lichened heads above the purple heather.

He must chance it, and he did and gained the stones in safety. He was now nearly at the bottom of the valley, and so far no one had noticed his escape.

But every moment was precious, and his heart beat hard as he crawled in and out among the rocks. His object was to gain the stream at the bottom. Its banks were high enough to shelter him from view, and once in the bed of the brook he could travel

faster. There was a bare space again beyond the rocks, but fortune still was kind to him. He found a little gully and wound his way down it on his stomach. The bottom was spongy bog-moss, and he was speedily soaked to the skin, but he never noticed this.

Then, just as he reached the brook, the water was speckled with plumping rain drops, and all in a minute a regular downpour lashed the moor.

Raikes could have shouted with joy. As he jumped down into the bed of the little stream, he glanced back. As if a curtain had been drawn across the scene, everything beyond a radius of fifty or sixty yards was shut off. The leat, the convicts, the warders—all had vanished.

Instead of slipping furtively up the channel, he dashed boldly across it and raced with all his might straight up the opposite hill.

His heart was pumping before he reached the top, but he did not stop until he was well on the downward slope again. He paused a moment to take breath behind the shelter of a huge crag, and then, and not till then, did the faint report of a distant rifle warn him that his escape had at last been discovered.

Raikes knew nothing of the moor—nothing at least beyond what he had picked up from casual conversations with other prisoners. There was only one thing of which he was certain—which was that the railway ran in a great loop around the northern edge, and that somewhere out in that direction was the large junction of Okestock. He made up his mind that this was the point to aim for. His notion was to stow away in a baggage truck and trust to chance for the rest.

He had no landmarks to go by. The rain had settled into a steady downpour which would last for hours, and which hid everything beyond a comparatively short distance. Dusk, too, was falling fast. An ordinary man would have been utterly lost inside five minutes, but once more Raikes' seamanship helped him out. He had taken his bearings before he left the leat. The rain had come up from a point between west and sou'-west. By keeping it on his left cheek he felt fairly certain of being able to hold his direction.

So he would have, but for the quite unforeseen fact that the wind began to back as soon as the rain came. Within an hour it was blowing from the south-east, and the consequence was that, instead of heading over the high moor for Okestock, Raikes was soon travelling along the southern edge of the moor, travelling in the direction of the village of Taviton.

It was not until long after dark that he had the slightest suspicion that he was off his course. Then he suddenly stumbled upon a rough cart track. He remembered hearing that there was no road of any kind in the whole fourteen miles between Moorlands and Okestock; thus finding the track naturally puzzled him.

By this time he was badly done. He had been going hard for more than three hours over some of the roughest country in England. Twice he had waded flooded streams, once he had been up to his waist in a black peat bog. Also he had had several nasty falls.

Not a mouthful of food had passed his lips since twelve o'clock, and the never-ending rain, driven by the cold wind, had chilled him to the bone.

Tough as he was, the unpleasant conviction forced itself upon him that he could not possibly last through the night without finding shelter of some kind, and after a few moments' consideration he made up his mind to follow the track. It would probably lead him to a building of some kind—a moorland farm, perhaps, where, with luck, he might creep into an outbuilding or a haystack and get a few hours' rest before continuing his flight.

He had not the remotest notion which way to go. It was quite by chance that he turned to the right. If he had gone to the left he would have walked straight down into the main road, and almost into the arms of a warder posted on Wallacombe Bridge barely a mile away.

It was something to feel firm ground under his feet, and he tramped doggedly through the puddles with his head bent forward and the rain streaming off his soaked clothes.

For half-a-mile or more the track led uphill; then by the increased force of the wind he knew that he had reached the top, and a few steps further on he caught sight of a faint glimmer of light a long way below.

It was far too dark to see the source of the light, and not until he got quite close did he find that it came from the curtained window of a building of some kind. By its redness and its occasional rise and fall he judged it to be from a fire rather than a lamp.

The nearer he got to the window the more puzzled he became as to the nature of the building to which the window belonged. Certainly it was not a farm. There was not an inch of tilled ground anywhere around.

Deep heather bordered the track on either side, and the track itself seemed to be covered with grass. There was not even a garden or the remains of one around this strange habitation.

The storm was so heavy that there was little chance of being seen or heard; still, for fear of dogs, Raikes trod lightly as he approached the building. At last he was near enough actually to touch the walls, which appeared to be built of rough-hewn granite. The building itself seemed square and solid—surprisingly so for a mere moorman's cottage. Raikes came to the conclusion that it was probably an old mine house, which was indeed the fact.

He crawled up to the window from which the light shone. The glass was broken, but a faded and ragged curtain which hung across it prevented his seeing into the room from which a confused murmur of voices proceeded.

Men's voices they were, and if Raikes had been less desperate he would have given it up and pushed on. But it was neck or nothing. He knew that, without at any rate food, he could not last till morning. He paused a few moments, and then began to make his way round the house.

The lighted window appeared to be in the front of the building, and groping onwards he came presently to a door. It had no handle, and, as far as he could make out by sense of touch, was nailed up. Beyond was a second window. This, undoubtedly, was boarded up.

The place was evidently a ruin, and it occurred to Raikes that the people inside were probably tramps camping for the night under shelter. But unless they had got in by the window there must surely be a door of some sort, and this he found at last at the back of the house.

To his great disappointment the door was fastened on the inside, but looking about he saw a very faint light which came from another window a little way to the left of the door.

It was boarded up like the other, but one board had slipped down, leaving a narrow gap through which he could see into a long and rather narrow room. This appeared to be a kitchen, for a peat fire was smouldering on an open hearth, and over it hung a great black kettle on an old-fashioned chain and hook.

One board had slipped down, leaving a narrow gap through which he could see into a long and rather narrow room.

There was no other light in the room except the dull glow from the dying fire, but

it was enough to show him the two things that mattered most: first, that there was no one in the room; second, that on a rough deal table in the middle lay the remains of a meal.

Raikes' mouth watered at the sight. He was simply famished, and he made up his mind there and then that—whatever happened—he would have a try for some supper.

He took hold of one of the boards and gradually put his weight on it. It was perfectly rotten, and came away without the slightest trouble. This enabled him to get a better view of the room, and to spot a door in the opposite wall, which no doubt opened into the living room.

Luckily this was closed, and rejoicing in his luck Raikes wasted no time in forcing away a second board. It was sounder than the first, but he trusted to the gale to drown the crack as it came away. A minute later he was safe inside the room.

The mere physical comfort of being out of the lash of the wind and rain was indescribable, but food was Raikes' first consideration, and he did not waste much time in taking stock of what lay on the table.

He saw the beggarly remains of what had once been a fine ham, about a third of a large loaf of bread, a wedge of cheese, and half-a-dozen bottles of beer, two only of which were empty.

It was characteristic of the man that—half-starved as he was—he filled his pockets before putting a bit in his mouth. He could not tell at what moment the inner door would open, so he provisioned himself ready for retreat. Then, with a hunch of a ham sandwich in his hand, he walked over to the fire and warmed himself while he ate.

There was a stack of dry turf in the corner by the fire, but he hardly noticed this. Next to food, the most urgent need of an escaped convict is a change of clothes. He hardly hoped to find anything of the sort in this out-of-the-way ruin, yet his luck held.

The smouldering turves fell together with a little rustle, a flame flickered up, throwing its light to the furthest end of the dingy, damp-stained room, and there, hung on a line suspended from wall to wall, were several rusty-looking garments.

Stuffing the last of his sandwich into his mouth, Raikes was in the act of stepping forward when the handle of the inner door turned. There was no time to reach the window. He ducked down behind the pile of peat, and was barely out of sight before the door opened and a man entered the room.

The man seemed of middle height, but monstrously deep in the chest, and with immense breadth of shoulder. He had a huge head, bald as an egg except for a fringe of black hair just above his collar. His heavy beard and moustache were black as coal, and he had a great hooked nose. He was a formidable looking figure, and Raikes' heart beat fast as he watched him.

The man came to the table and gathered up the unopened beer bottles. Raikes thanked his stars that he had not broached one. Then the newcomer went straight back into the front room, but having both hands full did not close the door behind him.

This was awkward for Raikes—very awkward. True, he could reach his window without being seen, but he could not reach the other end of the room where the clothes were. And he had set his heart on getting a change. For the moment he stayed where he was, racking his brain for some way out of the difficulty. And while he waited, voices came to him from the front room.

"Tell you what, Beresoff. The only thing that I'm afraid of is that Meaker won't have enough of the stuff," was the first sentence that Raikes heard.

"Bah, you talk nonsense, Pring," came the answer in a deep booming tone. "I have myself taken down forty pounds of the stuff. I tell you that if Meaker puts it in the right place it will do the job all right."

The voice, Raikes felt sure, was that of the big man. With his eyes still on the clothes, he wondered vaguely what the "stuff" was.

"Forty pounds," repeated the first speaker. "Yes, forty pounds ought to do the trick. It should be enough to lift their cursed engine of destruction clean out of the stocks."

"And most of the gaping fools who are watching," added the big man savagely. "I tell you, comrade, I would give five years of my life to be certain that our plans will not miscarry. But they cannot. We have laid them all too carefully. No one will suspect Meaker. If his courage does not fail him all will go well."

"He runs no risk," said the other. "It is not as though he had to use clockwork or a battery. The beauty of Dressel's device is that the weight of the ship makes the contact. No, Beresoff, there's no need to worry. We have them this time. We are going to strike a blow which will echo the world over—a blow which will make these tyrants, who crush the people with their armaments, tremble."

By this time Raikes was listening with all

He ducked down behind the pile of peat, and was barely out of sight before the door opened and a man entered the room. . . . The man came to the table and gathered up the unopened beer bottles.

his ears. Somehow the last few sentences sounded oddly familiar, and it came to him that he had heard almost exactly the same words from a red-tied, slouch-hatted spouter one Sunday evening in Hyde Park.

In a moment he had grasped the situation. He had stumbled into a nest of Anarchists who were plotting to blow up some ship—a ship on the stocks, and evidently a warship into the bargain, for they had spoken of an "engine of destruction" and of "the gaping fools who are watching."

Now, if Raikes was merely a reservist, he was as keen on the Navy as any A.B. in the Fleet. His fists clenched, and he rose to his feet. For a moment he quite forgot that he was an Ishmael, a fugitive beyond the pale of the law. He was a sailor again, a unit in the great and wonderful machine which has made the British Empire.

Beresoff's deep voice boomed out again.

"I am going to get some sleep. We must be away before daylight and catch the early train from Ashampton. The launch is at twelve, and there is much to do first."

"Dat vas de best thing ve can do," answered a third voice, which Raikes had not heard before. "And first I vill shut dat door. Dere was a beastly draught."

Raikes dropped down again behind the turf stack. But there was no need for this precaution. The last speaker merely pushed the door to without entering the back room.

Raikes waited. For a few minutes he heard a muffled hum of conversation. Then all was quiet except for the roar of the wind around the ruined roof. His mind was so busy with what he had overheard that it was several minutes before he realised all his luck. The men were asleep, the clothes were his for the taking; he had enough food to last him for a couple of days. There was nothing to do but help himself and go.

The road lay clear before him, yet he did not take it. In his mind's eye rose a picture of the great battleship on the stocks, the crowds watching and listening for the tap of the hammer on the chisel that would cut the rope, the crash of the dog-shores, the great hull sliding forward down the greased ways. Then the roar of an explosion, the instantaneous ruin of a million pounds' worth of labour—worse, the death and destruction hurled broadcast among the host of holiday-makers.

He glanced towards the door. He had a wild idea of trying to catch the conspirators asleep and overpowering them before they woke, but he dismissed it as foolish. In any case, the plot was already complete, and the explosive probably in place.

The only other alternative was to inform somebody in authority. That meant giving himself up—going back to that hateful prison on the hill, with nearly five years of misery still before him.

For perhaps a minute the fate of hundreds hung in the balance. Then, with a muttered curse, Raikes of the Reserve, still in his convict clothes, climbed back out of the window and tramped off up the track by which he had come.

An hour later, Principal Warder Caunter, keeping guard on Wallacombe Bridge, got the shock of his life. Wrapped in his cloak, and crouching for shelter from the driving rain behind the parapet, he suddenly felt a hand on his arm, and starting up and flashing his lantern, saw Raikes beside him.

Before the warder could speak, Raikes was pouring out his story in breathless, incoherent sentences. From the average convict such a story would have received scant belief, but as it happened Caunter knew Raikes well, and, besides, the man's bitter earnestness carried conviction with it.

So when he marched him back to the prison, instead of locking him up at once in his cell, he took him straight to the governor's house, and for a second time that night Raikes related his strange experiences.

"It's no yarn, sir," ended Raikes. "If you don't believe me I'll take you to the place now, this minute."

Colonel Peyton gave the man a quick glance from under his shaggy white eyebrows.

"I do believe you," he said quietly, "and I shall act on what you have told me. Now you will go to your cell, but be careful not to say one word of what you have learnt to anyone else in the prison."

The wires were busy that night, and before dawn a strong party of police had surrounded the old mine house, and the conspirators were roused from sleep to find themselves prisoners.

But that Raikes in the long run was no loser by his conduct may be gathered from a little paragraph which appeared in the London papers some three months later.

It ran as follows:

"The Home Secretary, on the recommendation of the Commissioners of H.M. Prisons, has remitted the remainder of the sentence of Peter Raikes, who was convicted two years ago of manslaughter and is serving his sentence in Moorlands Convict Prison."

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The first seventy-two pictures appeared in the "Royal Magazine" for July, August, September, October, November, and December. Copies may be obtained through any newsagent for 4½d. each (December Number 6d.), or the six numbers will be sent post free for 2s. 6d. from the Publisher, "Royal Magazine," 18 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

ON the following page you will find a set of twelve pictures representing the names of railway stations which have been selected by the Editor, and further sets of pictures will appear monthly in THE ROYAL MAGAZINE. These prizes are offered to the readers who discover the names of the railway stations represented under the conditions below.

WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO.

Competitors are required to write clearly in ink beneath each picture the name of the station they believe it represents, fill in their names and addresses in the space provided, cut out the page, and keep it until further instructions appear in THE ROYAL MAGAZINE. The last set of Picture Puzzles will appear in the June Number of THE ROYAL, published on May 22nd, 1915, making 144 pictures in all.

EXAMPLE:

DART-MOUTH.

KEEP YOUR LISTS UNTIL THE DATE FOR SENDING IN IS ANNOUNCED.

READ THESE CONDITIONS CAREFULLY.

1. Write the name of each station clearly in ink. One name only is allowed under each picture.
2. No alterations may be made in the names. If you have made a mistake, cross out the word and write it afresh. When you have filled up your list cut it out and keep it till we tell you what to do with it.
3. Competitors may send in as many complete series of pictures as they please, but each complete series will be judged independently. Sets must be fastened together in the top left-hand corner.
4. The prize of £500 will be paid to the competitor from whom the Editor receives a complete series of pictures with all the names correct of the actual stations as represented. If no competitor sends in a correct list the prize of £500 will go to the sender of the most nearly correct list. In the event of ties the prizes will be divided.
5. The Editor of the ROYAL will not be responsible for the loss or non-delivery of any attempt, and proof of posting will not be accepted as proof of receipt or delivery.
6. No member of the staff of the ROYAL MAGAZINE may enter for this competition.
7. Only the names of railway stations found on Pearson's List of Railway Stations will be admitted. This list is obtainable for 3d. through any newsagent or bookstall, or it will be sent post free for three penny stamps by The Publisher, Room 34, THE ROYAL MAGAZINE, 18 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.
8. Competitors must agree to abide by these conditions, and the Editor's decision is in every respect final.

EIGHTH SET OF PICTURE PUZZLES (Nos. 73–84).

73. .....

74. .....

75. .....

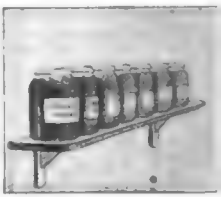
76. .....

77. .....

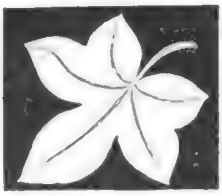
78. .....

79. .....

80. .....



81. .....



82. .....

83. .....

84. .....

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

The PERFECT HOST

"We know him well—he cannot tell
Untrue or groundless tales:
He always tries to utter lies.
And every time he fails."

By E. Newton Bungey.

Guy Wentworth began to wish he had not been so proud of his little car. Through the thickly-falling snow and the darkness of Christmas Eve she carried him on his way to Whitebridge, in Somerset, where he was going to spend Christmas at Jack Allington's new home, Redcliffe Manor.

He had spoken to Allington over the telephone that morning, their first conversation for five years, for Guy had only landed in England on the previous day. Almost his first act was to buy the latest model of the little car that he used to drive in India, and he told Jack Allington that he would run down on it.

Allington advised him not to, saying that there was snow about, and expressing a doubt as to the reliability of light cars. All Wentworth's pride in his new possession rose up in arms at once, and he said he would drive down in the face of a blizzard.

Certainly a storm had been the last thing that Wentworth expected when he set out from London, for the sun was shining brilliantly, and the sky was a gleaming arch of steely blue.

Twenty miles from London the snow commenced to fall, until now Wentworth side-slipped through a white world, longing for the delights and warmth of Allington's house, at which a crowd of mutual friends had gathered for the festive season.

Faster and faster fell the snow, until it was difficult to peer through the white mist, which rapidly grew duller and duller as the evening came on. Wentworth had to go much slower now, and but for his host's slightly disparaging remarks regarding the little car, he would have left it at the next garage and gone on by train.

With tightly-closed lips and steady, watchful eyes, Guy drove on relentlessly, though his car, except the bonnet, was covered with snow, which clogged the wheels and slowed the pace, until presently he was forced to come down to his second speed.

He pulled up, scraped the snow off a milestone, to find that he had only another twenty miles to go, and, with renewed confidence, drove on through the still-increasing blizzard.

Five miles later he stopped abruptly as a man in chauffeur's uniform appeared out of the snow cloud and waved to him.

"Can you help us, sir?" he said. "We've broken down just near here, with magneto trouble, and we can't move. There's only my young mistress in the car and she'll catch her death of cold."

Guy drove on, with the chauffeur running by him, for about thirty yards, and there he found a magnificent, but helpless vehicle drawn up at the side of the road. The chauffeur went to the door and opened it slightly.

"There's a gentleman here, miss, with a little car," he said.

A moment later Guy caught a glimpse of

a gloriously pretty face peeping out of a mass of furs, and he raised his cap.

"Have you far to go?" he asked.

"About fifteen miles," she replied, "to a house near Whitebridge."

"I'm going to a house there myself—to Redcliffe Manor, Mr. Allington's place."

A cry of delighted wonder broke from the girl.

"Why, so am I!" she said. "How very remarkable!"

"Then I can take you on!" exclaimed Guy, and added: "My name is Wentworth."

"Mr. Guy Wentworth!" repeated the girl. "Oh, I've often heard Mrs. Allington speak of you. My name is Stewart—Mavis Stewart."

"And I've heard of you," said Guy, with a boyish laugh, though he was glad of the darkness to hide his crimson face, for he had heard of Mavis through Jack Allington saying in one of his letters: "And when you come home we've got a pretty heiress looked out for you; Mavis Stewart is her name."

Guy and the chauffeur strapped one of Mavis' bags on the little car, and then the chauffeur started to tramp back to the nearest village. Guy scrambled in beneath the low hood, and presently Mavis sat by his side and the door and side wings were closed.

"I've not been to the Allingtons' new house yet," said Mavis presently. "Have you?"

"No."

"Then do you know the way?"

"Jack told me over the 'phone this morning. His are the first lodge gates on the right when we get through Whitebridge."

"But will you be able to see them, Mr. Wentworth?"

"Oh, yes. You see my headlights are very powerful."

Mavis glanced at the beams of light, which cut into the dense darkness and showed the thick lines of snow falling with deadly precision.

"They'll be wondering what has become of me. I promised to be there at six."

"And I between six and seven," said Wentworth, glancing at his watch. "It is now a quarter to eight."

"Look, some lights, Mr. Wentworth. This must be Whitebridge."

Guy glanced at the mileage on his speedometer.

"Yes; now for the first lodge gates on the right."

He drove slowly through the village, for the snow was thicker than ever, and just outside he floundered into a drift and had to drop to bottom gear to plough through.

"There's an opening!" exclaimed Mavis, a few minutes later. "Look, Mr. Wentworth, some open gates."

Guy swung the car round, but before they were a yard inside the gates, the car struck a young tree bent over by the weight of snow, veered sharply away to the right, and ran full tilt into a monster oak tree, but fortunately remained on its four wheels.

The engine stopped with a jerk, and for a moment or two Guy and Mavis sat still and silent.

"I'm awfully sorry, Miss Stewart," he said.

"It wasn't your fault, Mr. Wentworth; there was something in the way."

"I'll get her back and we'll crawl up to the house."

Guy scrambled out on the wrong side, so as not to disturb Mavis, and managed to get the engine going. But when he put in his reverse gear nothing happened—the engine revolved, but would not drive the car.

"It's the differential gone!" he exclaimed. "She won't budge now, Miss Stewart; we shall have to walk up to the house."

"I don't mind very much," she said, smiling at him deliciously.

"It's awfully sporting of you to take it like this."

She laughed, and stepped out into the driving snow, Guy following her. A moment afterwards she struggled back, whilst Guy stood knee-deep.

"I can't get through this," she said a little plaintively.

"But the drive is close at hand. If you don't object, I could carry you there."

She coloured slightly, but silk stockings and thin shoes are not ideal for walking knee-deep in snow.

"Thank you," she said softly.

He picked her up in his arms, revelling in the sensation, and stepped here and there until at last he stood little more than ankle-deep on the drive.

"We'll have to send a relief party for our bags," he declared, "and the car must take its chance."

Mavis began to slip in the soft snow, and twice she fell against him.

"You're not shod for such a walk," he protested. "Let me take your arm."

Holding her firmly, he piloted her along the drive, she finding a sense of security and

comfort in his strong arm. Suddenly they stumbled against a step and then climbed up, to find themselves standing by a large wide porch.

"Why, we're here," said Guy.

"But there are no lights," whispered Mavis, shrinking slightly against him. "Oh, is it the wrong house?"

"There's a faint light. We must get inside, wherever it is. You can't stay out in this any longer."

He led her into the porch, to find the door ajar, and a moment later they stood in a large hall, which was lit faintly by a small electric lamp.

"Is anyone here?" called Guy.

Not a sound came in reply, and he shouted again. Still there was no answer, and then he saw some switches on the wall and pressed them down, flooding the hall with a brilliant light.

"Oh, this isn't Mr. Allington's house," said Mavis. "They had no furniture like this in their hall."

"They were the first lodge gates we saw. I don't see how we could have missed any, unless it was when we were in that drift outside the village. Anyway, whoever lives here can't turn us out into this awful night. They'll have to put us up."

"Is anyone here?" he shouted again.

A moment later a clicking noise sounded from overhead, and the first landing was lit up. On the stairs appeared a man wearing a dressing-gown and carrying a revolver.

"Who are you?" he demanded.

"We've made a mistake, sir," replied Guy. "We were on our way to Redcliffe Manor, but missed the entrance and found yours. Our car is broken down near the gates."

The man on the stairs smiled and lowered his revolver.

A moment later a clicking noise sounded from overhead, and the first landing was lit up. On the stairs appeared a man wearing a dressing-gown and carrying a revolver.

"I suppose you don't know where you are?" he said.

"Not a bit."

"This is Stanton Hall; my name is de Courcy. I have just been growling at this snow which held me prisoner, but I'm glad I was kept here, otherwise you would have found the house shut. All my people and servants left early in the day, and I meant to follow this evening, but I gave up the idea."

He descended the stairs, and Guy and Mavis introduced themselves, de Courcy telling them that they had passed the Redcliffe Manor gates just outside the village. He led them into a dining-room, switched on the lights and an electric fire, and bade them remove their wraps and warm themselves.

"Fortunately there is something in the larder," he said. "We must all dine together."

He hurried from the room, and Guy turned smilingly to Mavis, thinking that she looked still more lovely now that she had removed her outdoor attire.

"We're very fortunate."

"Yes, but what will the Allingtons think?"

"That we have delayed our arrival until to-morrow on account of the storm."

Mavis put her little feet on to the fender, and a cloud of steam proceeded from them, for the lower portion of her skirt, and her shoes and stockings were sodden.

"I say, you're wet!" he exclaimed. "I wonder if de Courcy can produce anything."

Their host entered the room at that moment, and heard Guy's remark.

"You must help yourself from my wife's wardrobe, Miss Stewart," he said. "And I can fix you up, too, Mr. Wentworth."

He put down the tray he was carrying, and led the pair upstairs, showing Mavis into a prettily furnished bedroom, and bidding her take what garments she liked from the drawers and wardrobe. Then he took Guy to another room and fitted him out with dry things.

Presently they sat at the dining-room table, which was spread with cold chicken, a tongue, some bottles of wine, and other tasty things. The meal was a very merry one, de Courcy's genial, charming manner overcoming Mavis' reserve, for she naturally felt rather uneasy at being in a strange house with a stranger and another man whom she had only known for an hour or two.

"We could have telephoned to Allington," said de Courcy, "only unfortunately the wires are down owing to the storm."

The wine and warmth, coming after the exposure and journey, brought a drowsy feeling to Mavis which de Courcy was quick to notice.

"You must have my wife's room, Miss Stewart," he said. "I'm sure you would like to turn in."

Mavis felt too tired to object to anything, and presently retired; she locked her bedroom door, and before very long was fast asleep.

Guy and de Courcy had a couple of games of billiards, Guy being beaten easily each time, though he played a good average game. Then he, too, began to yawn, and de Courcy proposed that they should both turn in.

"I think it will be better," said Guy. "We are fortunate in not having to spend the night in the car, and I can assure you we are tremendously grateful to you for your kindness."

"Don't say a word about it, my dear chap," replied de Courcy smilingly.

He showed Guy to a room, and before long he was as deep in slumber as Mavis.

The latter woke just after eight o'clock, to find the morning bright and sunny. For a few moments she stared round in wonder, and then she began to recollect. She sprang out of bed at once and commenced to dress, and then discovered that there was no water in the bedroom or the dressing-room, neither was there a bathroom attached.

Slipping on her fur coat, she went to the door, meaning to steal along a little way in the hope of finding a bathroom. But as she went to turn the key she stepped back with a low cry.

She had locked the door last night; now it was unlocked.

In a startled manner she turned towards the dressing-table, and then, her hands locked tightly together, she stared with wide open eyes.

Her rings, bracelet, necklace, and gold watch had vanished.

"Oh!" she gasped.

For several minutes she stood gazing at the dressing-table, and then a sudden feeling of terror came to her. She began to believe that she was the victim of a plot, and that Wentworth was not the man he pretended to be. Probably he and de Courcy were confederates.

She must get out of this house at once, if they would let her, and hastily she finished dressing.

Meanwhile a somewhat similar scene took place in Guy's room. His door was unlocked, too, his gold watch, links, studs, and over a hundred pounds in gold and notes had vanished.

He stood staring round in dismay, and then slipped on a coat over his scanty costume.

"By Jove! It's a plant!" he exclaimed. "She piloted me here, to a house with one man in it. They're Raffles and his wife, or something like that."

He dashed from the room, bolted to the head of the stairs, and was just in time to meet Mavis, fully dressed in outdoor garb, coming from another corridor.

"Good morning," he said sarcastically, "getting off in good time, aren't you? But you left it a little too late."

She shrank back in terror, convinced that her worst fears were realised, and he, observing her attitude, felt certain that his suspicions were correct.

"Oh, let me go," she pleaded.

"Where's your—your confederate?"

"My what?"

"Come along, young lady, where's this chap who calls himself de Courcy?"

"How should I know?" Mavis demanded sharply. Then, her attitude changing, she came a step towards him, saying pleadingly, "If you'll let me go, I'll send you some money, I will, really, and you can keep my jewellery."

"Keep your jewellery! Send me money!" gasped Guy. "Look here, what does this game mean? I want my watch and money and other things. Where's your precious confederate?"

Mavis gazed at him wonderingly.

"Have you lost something, too?" she asked.

"Need you ask?"

"I need," she said, raising her head proudly. "My jewellery has been stolen, and I was afraid to stay here."

Guy watched her narrowly.

"Supposing we look together for friend de Courcy," he said.

"I am helpless in your hands."

He took her arm, and they entered the room which de Courcy had pointed out as his own. It was empty, but the bed had evidently been slept in.

"H'm! He's not in here," said Guy grimly. "We'd better go on searching?"

"Are you really Mr. Guy Wentworth?"

"I am."

"Oh, I don't know what to think. If you really are Mr. Wentworth then we must find Mr. de Courcy.

"Are you really Miss Stewart?"

"Of course."

She fumbled at the lace blouse she wore, unfastened a hook and showed him a little tab on the back bearing the initials M. K. C. S.

"There you are," she said. "Mavis Katharine Clifton Stewart."

His face grew crimson as he recollected his manner and his suspicions, and now she took up the attack.

"Prove that you are who you say you are," she said.

He fumbled in his pockets but found no letters there, and he stood abjectly before her. Then he suddenly sat on the stairs with his back to her.

"Excuse me a moment," he said.

A second or two later he turned with a sock in his hand, on the inside of which was a tab bearing the initials G. M. T. W.

"Guy Maurice Talbot Wentworth," he said.

Mavis involuntarily glanced down at his feet, one of which he instantly tried to hide behind the other, for it was naked in the slipper.

A peal of laughter suddenly broke from her lips, and directly afterwards Guy, his face somewhat red, joined her, and they stood laughing at each other.

"But where's de Courcy?" said Guy suddenly. "Let's look downstairs."

They made their way to the dining-room, and almost the first thing they noticed was a sheet of paper lying on the table.

"What's this?" exclaimed Guy, picking it up. "By Jove! It's a letter!"

Side by side they read the following:

IN GREAT HASTE,

The house has been burgled, and I am leaving this in case you come down before I return. I found the traces of the thieves in the snow, and am off after them and to warn the police. I did not wake you because I anticipated that you would require a long sleep after your fatiguing day.

R. DE C.

Guy and Mavis stood gazing at each other in silence for some little while.

"That explains everything," said Mavis presently; "evidently he did not know our rooms had been entered as well."

"Wonder how long he'll be," said Guy. "I'm feeling awfully hungry."

"Well, let's both finish dressing and then I'll get breakfast."

Guy's face grew crimson. He stared at

the sock he was still holding, and then made a frantic clutch at his bare neck.

"I—I forgot," he said; "I'll go at once."

He dashed upstairs, completed his toilet, and came down to find Mavis laying the table.

As they sat at their meal their conversation was practically confined to the burglary and to de Courcy's chances of catching the thieves.

Suddenly the sound of a motor-car caused them both to spring to their feet, and to hurry to the window. Ploughing its way through the deep snow came a heavy car driven by a chauffeur in livery.

"De Courcy must have sent help," said Guy, as he and Mavis made their way out into the hall. Then he added swiftly, "Or perhaps it's the Chief Constable of the county."

He threw open the door just as a short, red-faced man climbed out of the car. He stood for a moment or two in the snow, staring at Guy and Mavis, puffing something like a fish out of water, and then he suddenly sat on the running board of the car, and turned his head to gaze anxiously at the chauffeur.

"Thompson!" he said huskily. "Do you see anybody in the doorway?"

"Yes, sir. A young lady and gentleman," replied the chauffeur.

"Thank goodness!" muttered the new comer.

Then he sprang to his feet and marched up the steps, puffing out his cheeks as he walked, his eyes bulging, his gaze fixed fiercely on Guy and Mavis.

"Morning!" said Guy cheerfully. "I suppose de Courcy sent you. Are you the Chief Constable?"

The new arrival stopped dead, his face more crimson than ever, whilst an apprehensive look came into his eyes. He turned and beckoned to the chauffeur, who ascended the steps and stood by his employer's side.

"They are a couple of lunatics, Thompson. One of 'em called me a policeman."

"If you hold the young woman, sir, I'll tackle the man."

This short conversation, though conducted in husky whispers, was quite apparent to Guy and Mavis, and added a fresh complication to the already complex situation.

Mavis shrank against her companion, who instantly slipped a protecting arm around her waist and led her back into the hall, where he picked up a heavy stick.

He still held Mavis, but she smiled up at him in a way that set his heart beating at a ridiculous pace.

"We'll give them a warm welcome," he whispered.

"Now, look here, what does all this mean?" demanded the red-faced man from the step. "What are you people doing in my house?"

"Your house?" gasped Guy and Mavis in chorus.

"Yes, my house. My name is Marchmont, General Marchmont!"

"But this is Mr. de Courcy's house," said Guy. "It was burgled last night and he has gone after the thieves."

"Burgled!" the General almost screamed. He started to rush in through the porch, but Guy stood in his way.

"No, you don't," he said.

"How dare you keep me out of my own house?" thundered General Marchmont.

"Don't be silly," said Guy. "This is Mr. de Courcy's house."

Just then arose the sounds of another car coming up the drive.

"Ah!" exclaimed Mavis, "this must be Mr. de Courcy with the police."

A moment later the car came into view. It was a heavy touring car, and Guy instantly recognised the driver.

"Why, it's Jack," he shouted. "Jack!"

"Guy!" exclaimed Jack Allington, pulling up his car. "What on earth are you doing here?"

"They are in my house, Allington," screamed the General, "and won't let me in. That big fellow there does nothing but talk about some one named de Courcy and policemen."

"But this is quite beyond me," said Allington, gazing from one to the other. "Whatever does it all mean, Guy, and how do you come to be here with Miss Stewart?"

Despite sundry interruptions from the General, Guy told the story of the journey down and last night's happenings.

"Well, I don't know who your de Courcy is, Guy," said Allington, "but this is General Marchmont's house. He is staying with me for Christmas, and he thought he would drive over to see if things were all right, and I said I'd follow on."

In the face of this the astounded Guy could no longer maintain his hostile position in the doorway, and he stepped to one side, realising suddenly that he was still holding Mavis Stewart.

With a husky bellow the General rushed past and commenced an examination of his

Mavis shrank against her companion, who instantly slipped a protecting arm around her waist and led her back into the hall, where he picked up a heavy stick.

domain. Then Mavis looked up at Guy, her eyes twinkling, and she said softly:

"Then I am wearing Mrs. Marchmont's stockings."

"And I have got on the General's trousers," responded Guy.

Back came the General.

"Ransacked!" he bawled.

The others followed him into the house, and commenced to look for the head gardener and his wife, who had been left in charge.

Mr. and Mrs. Hobson, skilfully tied up and gagged, were discovered in separate cellars, where they had reposed since early on the previous evening. Hobson, when he could speak, stated that the front door bell rang, and when he answered it he just caught sight of a man he identified as de Courcy, and then a cloth was thrown smartly over his head and he was neatly dropped and bound. Then, Mrs. Hobson, her throat lubricated from the General's flask, stated that she was sitting with her back to the kitchen door, when a cloth suddenly fell over her. After this she was trussed up, and the unhappy pair put into safe positions.

De Courcy had made a clean sweep of all the small valuable articles in the house, showing an intimate knowledge of art and literature, for several almost priceless miniatures and first editions were amongst the missing.

"He is clearly a man of education," said Guy.

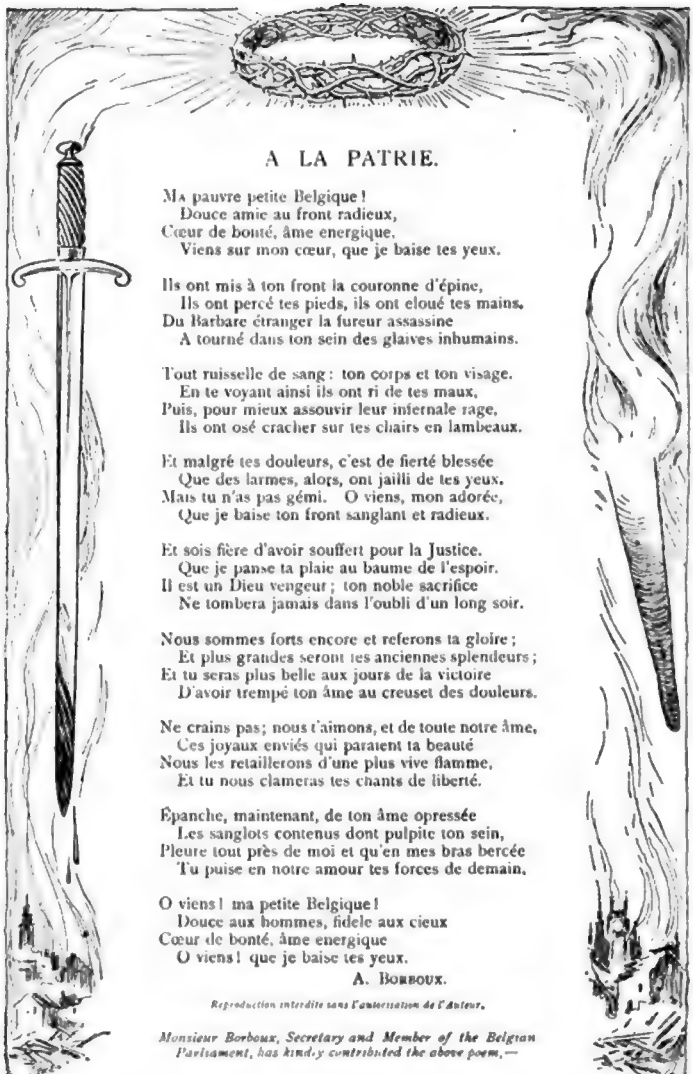
"And a perfect host," added Mavis.

The General's opinion was expressed under his breath.

"He must have been interrupted by our entrance last night," said Guy, "and overheard what we said. He realised that we did not know where we were, and that gave him the line to go on. For it was much easier to play the host than to resort to sterner methods."

De Courcy was never caught, and Guy and Mavis often speak of him admiringly.

"He was indeed a perfect host," declared Mavis. "When we entertain next Christmas, Guy, I hope you will be as good a one."



A LA PATRIE.

Ma pauvre petite Belgique!
Douce amie au front radieux,
Cœur de bonté, âme energique,
Viens sur mon cœur, que je baise tes yeux.

Ils ont mis à ton front la couronne d'épine,
Ils ont percé tes pieds, ils ont eloué tes mains.
Du Barbare étranger la fureur assassine
A tourné dans ton sein des glaives inhumains.

Tout ruisselle de sang: ton corps et ton visage.
En te voyant ainsi ils ont ri de tes maux,
Puis, pour mieux assouvir leur infernale rage,
Ils ont osé cracher sur tes chairs en lambeaux.

Et malgré tes douleurs, c'est de fierté blessée
Que des larmes, alors, ont jailli de tes yeux.
Mais tu n'as pas gémi. O viens, mon adorée,
Que je baise ton front sanglant et radieux.

Et sois fière d'avoir souffert pour la Justice.
Que je panse ta plaie au baume de l'espoir.
Il est un Dieu vengeur; ton noble sacrifice
Ne tombera jamais dans l'oubli d'un long soir.

Nous sommes forts encore et referons ta gloire;
Et plus grandes seront tes anciennes splendeurs;
Et tu seras plus belle aux jours de la victoire
D'avoir trempé ton âme au creuset des douleurs.

Ne crains pas; nous t'aimons, et de toute notre âme,
Ces joyaux enviés qui paraient ta beauté
Nous les retaillerons d'une plus vive flamme,
Et tu nous clameras tes chants de liberté.

Épanche, maintenant, de ton âme opressée
Les sanglots contenus dont pulpite ton sein,
Pleure tout près de moi et qu'en mes bras bercée
Tu puise en notre amour tes forces de demain.

O viens! ma petite Belgique!
Douce aux hommes, fidele aux cieux
Cœur de bonté, âme energique
O viens! que je baise tes yeux.

A. Borboux.

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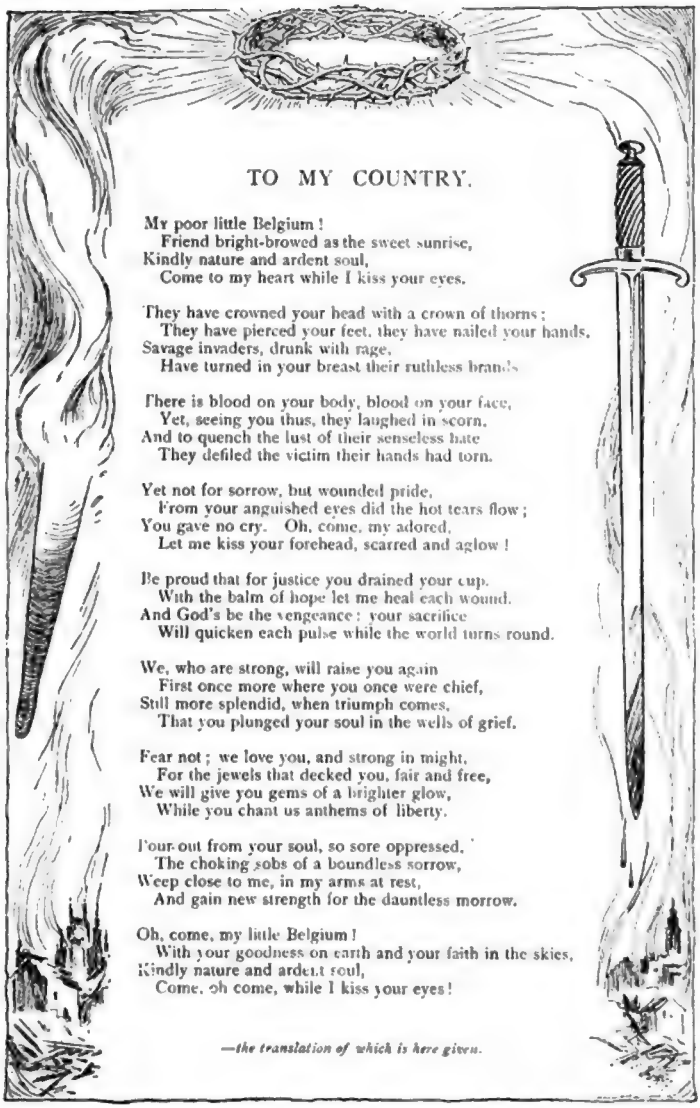
Monsieur Borboux, Secretary and Member of the Belgian Parliament, has kindly contributed the above poem.—



TO MY COUNTRY.

My poor little Belgium!
  Friend bright-browed as the sweet sunrise,
Kindly nature and ardent soul,
  Come to my heart while I kiss your eyes.

They have crowned your head with a crown of thorns;
  They have pierced your feet, they have nailed your hands,
Savage invaders, drunk with rage,
  Have turned in your breast their ruthless brands.

There is blood on your body, blood on your face,
  Yet, seeing you thus, they laughed in scorn,
And to quench the lust of their senseless hate
  They defiled the victim their hands had torn.

Yet not for sorrow, but wounded pride,
  From your anguished eyes did the hot tears flow;
You gave no cry. Oh, come, my adored,
  Let me kiss your forehead, scarred and aglow!

Be proud that for justice you drained your cup.
  With the balm of hope let me heal each wound.
And God's be the vengeance: your sacrifice
  Will quicken each pulse while the world turns round.

We, who are strong, will raise you again
  First once more where you once were chief,
Still more splendid, when triumph comes,
  That you plunged your soul in the wells of grief.

Fear not; we love you, and strong in might,
  For the jewels that decked you, fair and free,
We will give you gems of a brighter glow,
  While you chant us anthems of liberty.

Pour out from your soul, so sore oppressed,
  The choking sobs of a boundless sorrow,
Weep close to me, in my arms at rest,
  And gain new strength for the dauntless morrow.

Oh, come, my little Belgium!
  With your goodness on earth and your faith in the skies,
Kindly nature and ardent soul,
  Come, oh come, while I kiss your eyes!

—the translation of which is here given.

LOVE BELOW STAIRS.

"Sigh no more ladies, ladies, sigh no more—
Men were deceivers ever."

By Ada Leonora Harris.

Me and cook never could make out what made missis marry master.

Cook, who is romantic and takes in *The Family Treasure*, said perhaps it was a filter.

"Lor!" I said, "whatever could *that* have to do with it?"

She explained that what she meant was a love filter, and you spelt it with a "p." Anyhow, that was what the Earl of St. Sawbones gave to Lady Emmeline in last week's number.

She said you usually get it from some old party who lives in a cave or a back street with a black cat and a stuffed owl, and who gives you the stuff in a file—which, she explained, is also spelt with a "p" and means a medicine bottle—and then you watch your opportunity and pour it into the milk or the gravy when the party you want to filter is looking the other way.

Cook was here when I came, and the first time I saw her she was peeling onions, with the week's number of *The Family Treasure* propped before her, and crying—partly owing to the onions, and partly because Lord Adolphus had just been stabbed to the heart and wasn't expected to get over it.

A nice life the missis has with the master, though he worships the very ground she walks on, as you might say. Cook says one reason why he's so jealous of her is because she had a cousin in the Navy who was in love with her but wasn't thought good enough by her family, and, while he was at sea, master came along and whisked her off to church and married her—filtered or unfiltered—though I don't know how she knows, meaning cook.

Anyhow, one day I opens the door to a broad, curly-haired, reddy-brown faced gent with a look of the sea about him, who asked if the missis was in but wouldn't give his name. I went and told her; and she turned pale and seemed all of a flutter when I described him.

I went downstairs behind her and saw her open the door and heard her say:

"Oh, Jack! Is it really you? But why did you come when you know he won't like it?"

Then the door was shut and I couldn't hear any more, so I went and told cook, who clasped her hands and said:

"Lor, Clara! How romantic! Of course, that's the cousin. Now, if master was to come home and run him through the body it'd be jest like that story, 'The Bloodstain on the Hearth' in the Christmas number of *The Family Treasure*."

"You seem to forget," I said, "that we've jest done the spring-cleaning, and it would most likely mean having the carpet up again."

"Oh, well," she said, "of course, if you put it like that—but I do wish you'd got a bit more sentiment."

He stayed about half-an-hour, and when I went to let him out I thought the missis' eyes looked rather red.

"Good-bye," I heard him say. "I wish you every happiness. But, all the same, I think you might have waited for me."

Just as he was going down the steps master came round the corner. He had a fish-basket in one hand and stopped dead when he saw the other. Then he came tearing along and up the front steps and says:

"Who's that?"

I says:

"I don't know, sir. But missis is in the drawing-room, if you wish to know."

There was a regular flare-up. We could hear him down in the kitchen.

"If I catch him here," he shouts, "I'll wring his neck or shoot him like a dog"—which seeing, though peppery, he was about half the size of the other didn't seem likely.

About a fortnight after this cook took her day out at the Crystal Palace. It was getting on for eleven when I heard the area bell, and, going to let her in, saw her just saying "good-night" to a tallish party with his hat brim turned down and his collar turned up so that you couldn't see much but the end of his nose, which seemed to have a good deal of colour in it.

As soon as cook came in she plumped down in a chair and says:

"Oh, what a day this has been! What wonderful and unexpected things has happened. I was setting," she goes on, "listening to the band, when I hears a deep sigh, and, looking round, saw *him* sitting with his eyes fixed on me as though he couldn't help it, which he owned he couldn't. For there was a something that seemed to tell him as I was the twin soul as he'd been looking for so long—which was his words, not mine."

"Who's him?" I asks.

"Why, Algernon Montmorency de Vere," she answers proudly, "that you saw me shaking hands with so friendly jest now; though related to some of the ortiest of the aristocracy and calling them by their Christian names as free and easy as you please. What's more, he says he has never truly loved till now."

"Well," I says, "it seems to me you've been pretty quick about it. I hope his references are all right."

"Clara," she says, "the name's enough. And then the look of him That eagle eye! That nose! And the noble way he has with him. And yet that unassuming that he'll meet me at the corner my next Sunday out, and even borrowed fourpence in consequence of having no small change to buy a cigar on his way back."

"Well, cook," I says, "I hope it's all right, and I wish you joy."

"Thank you," she says, "There's jest one favour I should like to ask you," she says, "and that is, when we're alone to call me Ermingtrood, which I've told him is my name."

"Certainly, coo—I mean Ermingtrood, if it'll give you any satisfaction, and I can bear it in mind," I says.

Mr. Algernon Montmorency de Vere hung about a good deal during the next two or three weeks, and certainly did seem most devoted to cook.

He sent her notes, too, the language of which was most elevated. Cook got more sentimental than ever, and one day I caught her looking at a mark on her left arm just below the elbow.

"Clara," she said, "if I didn't know I'd done it myself with a hot flat-iron I might think it'd prove me to be the long lost child of noble parents."

One evening cook, who had caught a cold through too much philandering at the area gate, sent me with a message asking him to step in for a minute or two, which he did, and I must say behaved most agreeable, though I had no idea till then that he ran so much to pimples.

He said he was afraid his noble relatives might be a bit huffy at first at his marrying one who, though in every way worthy of his choice, was a trifle below him in birth—which, in consequence of the rents from his Irish estates not coming in as they should, might make it a bit awkward.

Cook fired up at this and said:

"Let 'em!" She'd got good money in the Savings Bank, besides nine pounds ten wrapped up in darning cotton in her work-box which was standing on the kitchen dresser.

He seemed interested in this, and kissed cook's hand on leaving as though she'd never blacked a grate or peeled a potato in her life.

As it happened, master saw him go—that is, he saw a tall man with his collar turned up slink, as he described it, past the house and wave his hand to someone, which it was cook at the kitchen window.

He made up his mind it was the missis' cousin gallivanting round; and there was a regular rumpus, with him declaring he'd go and load his revolver then and there so as to be ready for the cousin if he came again. Of course, I couldn't split on cook who dursen't explain that it was only Mr. Algernon Montmorency de Vere who she'd been entertaining (against the rules) with cold beef and pickles and a glass of beer. She was in a dreadful state of mind, too, at the idea of him being shot at by mistake.

"For," she says, "I should never get such a chance again; seeing, to tell the truth, as I shan't see seven-and-thirty again, and being nearly as many inches round the waist."

The next night, her cold not being much better, as soon as she heard his whistle about half-past eight, she asked me to go and fetch him in again.

"But, for goodness' sake," she says, "tell him to be careful."

"Oh, it's all right," I says. "Master's

out. I heard him bang the door a quarter-of-an-hour ago."

I brought him in and was just thinking whether I hadn't better go and sit in my bedroom and leave him and cook together when there came a tremendous ring at the bell.

"Lawk-a-mussy!" cried cook. "That's master come back. For goodness' sake, make haste and let him in, or he'll suspect something."

He bounced in when I opened the door, and banged it behind him so that the whole house seemed to shake as well as me.

"Now I've got him," he said. "Where's my revolver? If I hadn't left my latchkey behind I could have caught him unawares."

"Oh, dear," I cried, without thinking, "there'll be murder done, as sure as I'm alive."

"Then you don't deny as there is someone on the premises?" he said. "I saw him enter not five minutes ago, and I'll have him out, dead or alive. Now, then, where are you going?" as I made for the kitchen stairs. "Stop where you are while I go and get my revolver."

Cook, who had been listening, came creeping up as soon as his back was turned, looking as pale as a ghost.

"Where is he?" I whispered.

"In the cupboard in the scullery with the brooms and brushes," she whispered back.

"Now then," said master, coming downstairs. "What's all that whispering about? There doesn't seem to be anyone upstairs, but I'm going to search the house."

Cook fell on her knees.

"Oh," she says, clasping her hands, "there *is* somebody here, I own it. But it isn't the missis he's after; it's me."

"A likely story," he says. "You women always hang together, and back each other up. I'll begin with the coal-cellar."

I helped her down the kitchen stairs, her legs giving way under her, and we kept behind him while he looked in the cellar and the pantry, and then came to the very cupboard where cook had hid her Algernon.

The door stuck a bit, so that master had to put down his revolver and use both hands to it. Then it flew open unexpected, and he fell back on the top of cook, and they both came to the ground together.

And the cupboard was empty!

"It's all right," I says softly in cook's ear, as she picked herself up, and the master used language. "He's got away. At anyrate, he isn't——"

Just then there came another ring at the bell.

"Who's that?" says master, savage-like at having found nobody and bumped himself into the bargain.

"I'll go and see, sir," I says.

"You'll do nothing of the sort," he replies, looking behind the mangle. "I'll go myself."

We were only too glad to let him. So cook and me went into the kitchen, and she sat down heavy on a Windsor chair, and turned up her eyes.

"What a escape!" she says. "My heart was in my mouth—why, where's my workbox as I left open on the table?"

"And, goodness gracious!" I says. "Where's the plate-basket as I left there, too?"

Then, as we were looking at each other, we heard master talking to somebody in the hall.

"Come along and bring him with you."

"Whatever's up now?" I says. Then cook gave a squeal as she saw master and a policeman, which the last had Algernon Montmorency de Vere by the collar, likewise her workbox and the plate-basket.

"Good-evening," says the policeman, speaking most polite, though red in the face with his exertions. "I believe some of this is your property which I caught this party walking off with. He's been wanted for one or two little things, and they'll be uncommon pleased to see him at Bow Street."

"Wanted!" gasped cook. "You're never meaning Algernon Montmorency de Vere, my fi-ancy?"

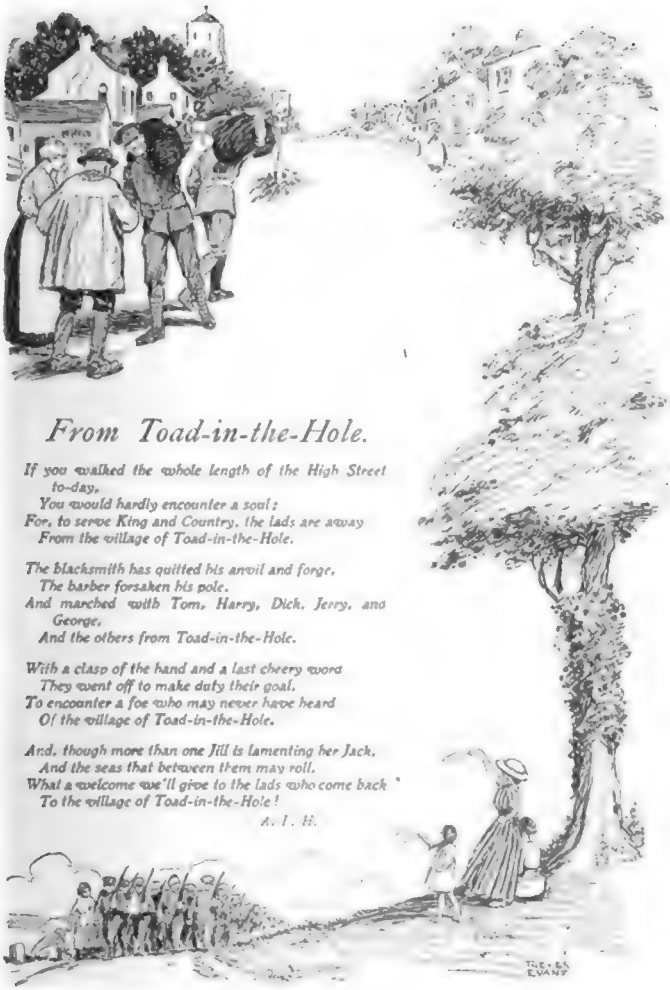
"Not much," he answers with a wink. "This here's Joe Hoggins, or 'the Dook,' as he's called by some because of the way he gammons the women with his tall-talk. He's wanted for a matter of shoplifting. Also, I believe, there's a case or two of bigamy against him."

Cook gave a wild shriek, and fainted dead away. And I was so flustered that I up with a basin of cold starch that was handy and emptied it over her.

And in the middle of it all in walks the missis, who'd been out in the garden for a breath of fresh air, and wants to know what in the world's the matter.

Well, they took him away, and, what with one thing and another, he got six months hard, and cook and me got a month's notice each, though afterwards overlooked in consequence of it not being my fault and cook having such a light hand at pastry.

Anyhow, it's an ill wind that blows nobody good, for the policeman who caught Alger—I mean Joe Hoggins—has asked me to walk out with him.



From Toad-in-the-Hole.

If you walked the whole length of the High Street to-day,
You would hardly encounter a soul;
For, to serve King and Country, the lads are away
From the village of Toad-in-the-Hole.

The blacksmith has quitted his anvil and forge,
The barber forsaken his pole,
And marched with Tom, Harry, Dick, Jerry, and George,
And the others from Toad-in-the-Hole.

With a clasp of the hand and a last cheery word
They went off to make duty their goal,
To encounter a foe who may never have heard
Of the village of Toad-in-the-Hole.

And, though more than one Jill is lamenting her Jack,
And the seas that between them may roll,
What a welcome we'll give to the lads who come back
To the village of Toad-in-the-Hole!

A. I. H.

THE SECRET OF THE ISLAND.

An Extraordinary Adventure of Dr. Merryweather, of Harley Street.

By F. A. Symons.

I.

Dr. Merryweather, sitting at his desk in his luxurious consulting-room in Harley Street, looked up from the treatise he was reading and glanced involuntarily towards the door. The sound of the closing front door had caught his ear, followed by the echo of the footsteps of his maid and another in the hall.

The next moment the trim maid opened the door.

"Mr. Jobson!" she announced, retiring softly.

The visitor, a little man, with a deprecating manner, ferrety eyes, and a wrinkled, clean-shaven face, looked about him furtively, then ventured a few steps into the room.

"Won't you take a chair, Mr. Jobson?" asked the doctor, carefully studying the little man's physiognomy.

"Ah—er—thank you, sir," answered the man, seating himself on the extreme edge of the chair.

For some seconds the doctor continued to study his presumed patient in silence. He appeared to be about forty years of age, his short black hair showing grey at the temples. His mouth was abnormally large, and his lips thin and sensitive. The most peculiar feature of his face, however, was his nose, which was deflected well to the left and adorned on its right side with a large mole. In his hands he slowly twisted a soft felt hat, and his pepper-and-salt suit was such as might have been worn by an indoor servant on a holiday.

"Well, and what can I do for you?" inquired the doctor at last.

The little man rubbed the mole on his nose reflectively, then coughed.

"It isn't about myself, sir, that I have come," he explained, again glancing suspiciously about the room. "It is my master."

"Ah. I see. Your master is ill. He wants me to go and see him. Is that it?"

"Yes, sir, that's it," assented Jobson without moving.

"Well, then, if you will give me his address, I will call a taxi at once," said Dr. Merryweather promptly. "I am quite ready."

The little man again coughed nervously, continued to twirl his hat round and round, and appeared to be studying the pattern on the carpet.

"'Taint quite so easy as that, sir," he asserted. "It will likely take—er—nearly a week to reach my master."

He sighed profoundly.

"He is very ill. He thinks he needs an operation, sir." Extracting a leather pocket-book from the inside pocket of his coat as he spoke, he produced a packet of bank-notes, and, wetting his finger, methodically counted out twenty of them. "My master gave me orders to find a doctor, sir, who would be willing to come and operate on him. I was instructed to offer the sum of two hundred pounds to a young surgeon with a—er—good reputation, sir."

"Humph! And so I fill the bill, eh?" grunted Merryweather. "Complimentary, if nothing else. But you say it will take a week to reach your master?"

"Yes, sir—about that. A yacht is waiting for us at Southampton now, ready to start."

The little man rose to his feet, and his tone grew earnest, almost pleading.

"It is, I believe, sir, a case of life or death. I was told to give two hundred pounds down, and to promise another three hundred on completion of the operation. Also, sir, if you are kept away more than three weeks, you are to get one hundred pounds for every extra week."

"Ah, I see. A week there presumably means a week to return—say, three weeks in all. H'm—five hundred pounds. Sounds fair enough. But what guarantee have I that I shall ever get the remaining three hundred, not to mention the possible hundred or so to follow?"

With methodical exactitude, the little man handed across the twenty notes to the doctor, and again proceeded to explore the pocket-book.

"Those notes, sir, you will observe, are for ten pounds each. I have here another six, for fifty each, which I obtained from a bank this morning. This money I am prepared to pay into the credit of your banking account at once. You will then give me your cheque for three hundred pounds, which will be returned to you on completion of the operation. You could easily stop payment of the cheque if you did not meet with fair treatment."

Dr. Merryweather's countenance expressed obvious indecision. Five hundred pounds for what would, probably, prove to be nothing less than an enjoyable three weeks' holiday was not to be refused with a light heart. The principal in the affair, to all appearances, intended to play straight. He was evidently a rich man, a desirable patient.

"But why did your master not write me a letter?" he asked, suddenly searching the little man's eyes. "And what is his name?"

"He said, sir, that as he was an absolute stranger to you, sir, he presumed that you would prefer bank-notes to a letter," retorted Jobson, with a face as wooden as a graven image. "His name is Mr. Grayson, sir."

"H'm! What is the matter with him? And who are you?"

"He thinks he has cancer, sir," answered the man promptly. "I am his valet and confidential man, sir."

The doctor consulted his watch, picked up the telephone receiver tentatively, and then again faced his visitor.

"Where is the place I am to go to?" he cried.

"One of the Azores, sir."

The doctor's eyes stared in wonder.

"She is a very fast yacht, and very comfortable, sir," asserted Jobson, with unfeigned anxiety. "Six hundred tons, sir, and a good *chef*."

Dr. Merryweather's face relaxed, and, with a light laugh, he again gave his attention to the telephone.

"No. 273416 Gerrard, please."

"You will come, sir?" intervened the little man deferentially.

The doctor held up his hand to demand silence.

"Is that you, Hardy? Look here, old fellow, I have to go away this afternoon for, perhaps, three weeks on urgent professional business. Can you kindly look after my work for me? H'm! . . . Excellent! *Au revoir*, then!"

Hanging up the receiver, the doctor again turned towards Jobson.

"Yes, I will go," he said. "It is now eleven o'clock. I can be ready by two."

"That will do nicely, sir," replied the valet respectfully. "There is a train, sir, at two-fifteen from Waterloo. I will be here with a taxi, sir."

Again extracting the notes from his pocket-book, he laid the three hundred pounds on the desk.

"You can give me your cheque when we get on board, sir. There is no hurry. I shall be here at two with the taxi, sir. Good morning, sir."

The door shut quietly, and Jobson was gone. The doctor, carefully examining the notes, permitted himself a soft chuckle of satisfaction. He needed the money badly; the boredom of his want of patients would be escaped for three weeks; a trip to the Azores would do him all the good in the world.

Within a few minutes he had given his orders to his maid, and was on his way to the bank. A visit to Dr. Hardy followed. Then came a quick luncheon, the packing of a portmanteau and his instruments, and he was ready.

On the stroke of two, the valet, as cool and obsequious as ever, stood on the doorstep.

Immersed in pleasant day-dreams, the doctor found the journey to Southampton unusually short. The train pulled up at the Docks Station. Jobson, followed by a porter with the luggage, led the way at once to the quay, where a white gig, manned by four sailors, already awaited them.

The coxswain touched his cap to the doctor, received the passengers and luggage, and, without a moment's unnecessary delay, pushed off into the stream.

"The *Mignonette*, sir," remarked Jobson, pointing to a white, rakish, two-masted, yellow-funnelled steamer anchored not half-a-mile from shore.

"Ah!" ejaculated Merryweather. "So that's her, eh! A smart-looking craft. Fast, too, I should think?"

"She can do a steady eighteen, sir," intervened the coxswain, with pride.

The gig was soon alongside the gangway. A couple of sailors seized the luggage. Merryweather sprang on deck.

The captain, a stout, red-faced, little man, raised his cap politely.

"This is Dr. Merryweather, of Harley Street, London," explained Jobson.

"Happy to meet you, Doctor," cried the skipper genially. "If you are quite ready, we will weigh anchor at once, and be off with the tide."

"I am entirely in your hands, Captain, for the next week," said Merryweather, looking about him at the whiteness of the deck.

Following the valet's direction, Merryweather found himself in a dainty saloon, pannelled with bird's-eye maple and upholstered in blue morocco. A white-capped *chef*, disappearing at the moment towards the galley, proved the truth of Jobson's promise concerning the cuisine. The cabins were in the stern. The one apportioned to the doctor was the largest. Here he found a standing brass bedstead in an apartment, cretonne-hung, and as dainty as a lady's boudoir. And there was an adjoining bathroom, with hot and cold water.

"This is Mr. Grayson's own cabin, sir," stated Jobson, unstrapping the doctor's portmanteau, and proceeding to arrange the contents in a mahogany wardrobe.

The doctor, changing his straw hat for a yachting cap, returned to the deck with a smile upon his lips.

"If you ring the smoking-room bell, sir, when you require anything—cigars—whisky—cocktails—I shall be obliged, sir," called Jobson as the doctor left the cabin.

The days slipped by in calm monotony, each one almost exactly like its predecessor. The weather was growing rapidly warmer. The doctor, having the run of the vessel, explored it from stem to stern. There was but one place denied him. That was the chart-house.

When at first he had requested to be shown the day's run on the chart, the captain apparently forgot the request. When the same forgetfulness followed his repeated queries relative to the location, the passenger began to see method in the skipper's lack of memory.

Seven days came, and went, and still the *Mignonette* ploughed steadily onwards. It was on the evening of the eighth day out that Merryweather made a stand. Despite continuous fair weather, the yacht showed no sign of reaching any definite destination. As the hours sped on he began to experience a sensation of increasing alarm, until by the time he had finished dinner he had determined to probe this mystery to the bottom before he slept.

The steward, removing an ice-pail containing an empty hock bottle, placed dessert and decanters on the table.

"Coffee and cigars on deck, sir?" asked the man.

"Yes," replied the doctor shortly. "And Jobson with them, please."

"Jobson, sir?"

"Yes. I wish to see Jobson at once."

"Very good, sir," answered the steward, noting the guest's manner with surprise.

Deep in troubled thought, Merryweather mounted to the deck, and selected his favourite lounge chair near the after binnacle.

"Coffee, sir!" announced the steward at his elbow.

Mechanically helping himself to sugar and a glass of liqueur brandy, the doctor half-closed his eyes in thought. A moment later the round, bare head of Jobson appeared at the opening of the companion-way.

"You want me, sir?" inquired he blandly.

"I do," snapped the doctor.

The little man, his ferrety eyes staring characteristically in front, waited attentively. For some seconds the doctor observed the valet's impassive face with care.

"In London, Jobson, you told me we should reach our destination—one of the Azores—in seven days," he said judicially. "We have now been eight days in perfect weather. I want an explanation."

"I told you a lie, sir," answered Jobson without hesitation. "It was, however, the only untrue thing I told you."

He coughed deprecatingly.

"We are not going to the Azores, sir, but to another island where my master prefers to live away from the world. He does not wish for troublesome visitors, so he gave me orders to keep the name and position of the island secret."

"Humph! And so I am not to know my destination, eh?"

"Quite so, sir! We will be there in a few days, and I shall be much obliged, sir, if you would kindly abstain from trying to find out our whereabouts."

"Ah, I see. And so Mr. Grayson is afraid I may publish his island in England?" grunted the doctor.

The valet shrugged his shoulders, absent-mindedly rubbed the mole on the side of his nose with his forefinger, and coughed.

"He—er—likes to be sure that he is absolutely private; that's all, sir," murmured he.

"I understand. Good-night, Jobson!"

"Good-night, sir," answered the valet, imperturbably, turning away.

II.

Merryweather was awakened at break of day by the stoppage of the engines. The sudden change to absolute stillness after days of the continuous throbbing of machinery, caused him to spring from his bed and rub his eyes.

The yacht lay peaceably at anchor in a little land-locked bay, and the first flush of sunrise was just showing above the clumps of mangroves shading the eastern side.

"There's the house up there, sir," stated Jobson, pointing a lean finger towards the top of the bay. "You can just see the roof of the house through the trees, sir. He must be worse, or he would have come out in the boat to meet us."

"Does he live there all alone?" inquired Merryweather, looking at the long, low, thatched bungalow standing in a natural clearing on a small plateau.

"Mr. Grayson is the only white man, except the yacht's crew and myself, on the island, sir. We take lots of cruises in the yacht. He must be very bad—probably in bed. Can you be ready soon, sir?"

"Ah!" grunted the doctor, once more assuming his professional attitude. "Give me ten minutes, and order a boat, Jobson!"

Curiosity and professional zeal combined to accelerate the doctor's preparations. He lost little time in slipping into his thinnest suit and collecting his instruments. The valet, packing the portmanteau with deft fingers, made no further comments.

The journey ashore was quickly made. Except for a couple of native fishing-boats, there was no sign of life. A path from the shore, winding through overhanging and intertwining tropical foliage, led up to the bungalow. The place was very still. As to what sort of man he expected to find awaiting him, Merryweather could not determine. Deep curiosity was rapidly obsessing him.

With a gesture of anxiety, Jobson suddenly started to run towards the house, and, entering the open door, left the doctor alone.

A few minutes passed almost in silence; then Jobson, his face reflecting the anxiety of his mind, appeared on the threshold.

"Will you come now, sir?" he whispered. "My master is much worse. I am sure you are none too soon, sir."

With a firm, quick step, Dr. Merryweather entered the house, crossed what appeared to be a dining-room, and followed the valet through a bead *portière* into a bedroom. Glancing comprehensively about him, he noticed the simple furniture, so markedly different to the luxuriousness of the yacht's cabin. In the middle of the room stood a mosquito-curtained wooden bed.

With a groan of pain, the occupant of the bed thrust aside the curtains, and raised himself on his elbow. He was a middle-aged man, with hair almost snow-white, and his expression, as his eyes met the doctor's, was one of extreme melancholy. That he was prematurely aged was obvious at a glance.

"I thank you for coming, Doctor," he whispered hoarsely. "I hope Jobson made you comfortable on board the yacht?

"Quite comfortable, thank you," replied Merryweather, noting the bout of pain which threatened to collapse his patient. "I understand that you think you need an operation. Please lie down. May I examine you at once?"

Without waiting for a reply, Dr. Merryweather felt the sick man's pulse, and immediately began his examination. For some minutes the stillness of the room was only relieved by the ticking of a travelling clock. Jobson, alert and watchful, stood in the doorway awaiting the doctor's verdict with ill-concealed nervousness.

"Well?" said the patient presently.

"I'm afraid there is no doubt that I must operate," replied Merryweather gravely. "And the sooner the better."

The patient made no sign that he had heard.

"And I must warn you that there is danger—grave danger," added the doctor.

Mr. Grayson's eyes opened slowly, meeting the doctor's gaze searchingly.

"Ah!" he breathed. "I see that you offer little hope. Still, I must hold to that little with all my strength. I absolutely *must* live."

For a moment he covered his face with his hands, and the groan of a strong man in agony escaped him.

"How soon can you be ready, doctor?"

With a rapid survey of the room, Merryweather saw that the very bareness of the furniture was to its advantage for his purpose.

"In fifteen minutes," he answered promptly.

Turning away from the bed with intent to give the necessary orders to Jobson, he suddenly paused in spellbound astonishment, as if rooted to the ground.

Framed in the bead *portière* of the doorway stood one of the most beautiful women he had ever seen!

He gasped involuntarily.

It was, perhaps, the unexpectedness of the girl's beauty which caused the surprise more than anything else. Above the average height, she was dressed in a clinging gown of white, which accentuated the ethereal aspect she presented. She could not have been more than one-and-twenty, but upon her face was that self-same aspect of deep melancholy which distinguished the man. Her luminous

brown eyes were suffused with tears, and her parted lips seemed unable to form any sound.

At that moment, however, Merryweather was given little time for speculation, for, with a half-stifled cry, the girl glided across the room, and, dropping on her knees at the bedside, began to whisper softly, then broke into piteous sobbing.

Merryweather left the room hurriedly in search of Jobson. His task had suddenly presented complications other than surgical.

He found the valet standing, immobile, on the verandah.

"Who is that lady?" he demanded angrily. "Your master may be dead by nightfall, and I must know where we stand. What else have you concealed from me?"

"She is my master's daughter, sir," answered the valet laconically.

"But why this concealment?"

"She never sees anybody, sir. I was under a promise not to mention her to you. She did not intend to see you at all, but she heard what you said about the operation."

The woodenness of his face suddenly gave way, and he broke into an audible sob.

"If master goes, God help her! She has suffered enough already without that?"

III.

With the assistance of Jobson, whose stoical attitude had returned to him, Dr. Merryweather at last succeeded in removing the tumour which had been sapping the patient's strength for many months. He saw no more of the grief-stricken girl. Whether she was hovering near or not, he did not know, and had no time to conjecture.

The operation finished, the doctor threw himself into an armchair on the verandah in a semi-exhausted condition.

It was some time after noon when, at the touch of Jobson's hand, he awoke with a start.

"Come, sir, quickly!" he said.

Springing to his feet, the doctor ran across the dining-room, and thrust aside the *portière*.

A wild-eyed, beautiful vision, standing by her father's bedside, met his eyes. It needed no surgeon's skill for him to see that his operation had been too late. Whatever troubles had aged the silent figure on the bed could no longer have power over him.

During the two days which followed, Dr. Merryweather made himself as useful as he was able. There was, however, little for him to do. The burial, carried out by the yacht's crew, was a simple matter, the business necessary for closing up of the bungalow almost as simple. The doctor was glad to see that the girl was making no attempt to remain on the island alone.

She held curiously aloof, speaking to Merryweather only when absolutely necessary. The latter, out of sympathy for her forlorness, made one or two efforts to attract her attention. There was, however, no answering light in her dark eyes, no vestige of response.

On the third day, as the sun edged above the tree-tops, the *Mignonette* steamed out of the bay. The doctor and Miss Grayson being the only occupants of the saloon, the former looked forward to breaking down the girl's reserve sooner or later.

Her meals, however, were served in her own cabin—the one which Merryweather had occupied on the voyage out—and when she appeared on deck she showed as plainly as any woman could that she wished her presence to be absolutely ignored. The captain never spoke to her, nor, in fact, would he ever speak of her to the doctor.

The *Mignonette* ran past the Needles, and dropped anchor in Southampton Water at sunset. The doctor prepared to take his departure at once. The final attempt to offer his services to his hostess proved as unavailing as ever. To his surprise, however, she pressed his hand at parting, with tears in her eyes and heartfelt words of thanks upon her lips. It was obvious that no personal antipathy had deterred her from accepting his companionship on the voyage.

IV.

It was in the week preceding Christmas that Dr. Merryweather found himself summoned one night to the bedside of a lady patient, whom he had been attending for some time. She was a wealthy and fashionable widow, once a society butterfly of the smartest set.

"Dr. Merryweather," she cried, as he entered the room, "I am dying."

The doctor, making no sign of negation, placed his fingers on her pulse.

"Yes, I am dying," she murmured. "I am going to stand before the Judge at last. But I must say something before I go, even if it takes my last breath. Write down, please, what I have to say before it is too late. It should have been said three years ago—three long years ago—three years during which I have been in torment."

The doctor said no word. He had seen many strange cases. Producing his pocket-book and pencil, he waited. He knew

("THE SECRET OF THE ISLAND" continued overleaf.)

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something of this woman's history, and suspected more. There was obviously no time for unnecessary words. Her pulse was flagging already.

With a feeble gesture of her hand, she ordered the nurse from the room, then again bent feverish eyes on the doctor's face.

"Write," she said. "Quickly! You remember that celebrated murder trial in Edinburgh, in which I was the principal witness nearly three years ago—the case of Lady Margaret Ackroyd, the daughter of the Earl of Lithgow?"

"Yes," answered Merryweather readily, "I remember it well. The Scotch verdict of 'not proven' was brought in—in the case of Lady Margaret, a terrible verdict."

For a moment the dying woman, her eyes shut, made no answer. The doctor, watching her carefully, became filled with burning curiosity. Was this stricken woman by his side really capable of throwing fresh light upon this case, which at the time had convulsed the whole of English society? As he had stated, he remembered every detail of it still.

During a fashionable country house-party in Perthshire, Lady Margaret Ackroyd, a young and beautiful *débutante*, of not more than eighteen years of age, was found in her bedroom with the body of a well-known *roué*, who had been stabbed to the heart with a pair of scissors. The evidence had seemed pitifully conclusive. The scissors belonged to Lady Margaret. The attentions towards the girl by the murdered man had been most marked, and had been resented by her.

That he should have been found in his night attire in the girl's bedroom seemed to tell the tale only too plainly. To defend her honour a woman will do much—even murder. Nevertheless, through cross-examination and counter-examination the accused had denied her guilt absolutely. Despite the fact that she was found alone in the room with the body, she stated that she had found the body already there when she entered the room to go to bed.

The jury, more for the sake of her personal charm and the victim's bad reputation, had brought in their well-known verdict.

"Write this," commanded the dying woman, her eyes still shut, and her hands clasped as if in prayer.

"I, Beatrice Gordon, being on my death-bed, confess that it was I who murdered Sir John Gervaise at Perthness Castle on the night of June 7th, 1907."

Merryweather ceased to write mechanically; his heart was thumping against his ribs like a piston. Was this woman in her right mind and senses? In his position as her doctor, the point was important.

"Go on," she urged him, as if she divined his thoughts, "I am quite sane. And before God, I am telling the truth—belated truth, but none the less true."

"Poor girl! Poor Lady Margaret!" breathed the doctor, taking up his pencil again.

"Sir John was my lover. I was jealous. I knew that Margaret did not welcome his attentions, but none the less I was jealous. I was in my room, which was next door to hers. I saw Sir John slip into her room for the purpose of awaiting her there.

"I followed him, upbraiding him. By vile words he drove me mad with anger. Seizing a pair of long, sharp-pointed scissors from the dressing-table, I rushed at him blindly. The next moment he lay at my feet, with the scissors in his heart."

She paused for breath. The doctor's fingers again automatically sought her pulse.

"Go on!" urged he.

"I crept back into my room," she continued with a shiver. "Ten minutes later Lady Margaret came upstairs. I heard her scream, and I rushed in. My jealousy was not yet dead; also, I was mortally afraid. I gave false evidence. I—— Quick! Give me the paper to sign. And may God have mercy on my soul!"

The doctor did not hesitate. Moments were precious. He summoned the nurse. With trembling fingers, the penitent woman affixed her signature. Merryweather and the nurse witnessed it.

The effort had exhausted the patient's strength. There was a long-drawn sigh, a gasp for breath, and she passed into Eternity.

Three days later, Dr. Merryweather sat in his consulting-room. He had dispatched the confession of Mrs. Gordon, with a covering letter, to the address of the Earl of Lithgow, in Scotland, the same evening as he had received it.

He heard the door-bell ring, and a moment later the maid opened the door. Upon the threshold stood Miss Grayson.

In an instant the doctor was on his feet.

"I have come to see you about your letter and the late Mrs. Gordon," said the girl quietly.

"*You!*"

"Yes," she answered. "I am Lady Margaret Ackroyd."

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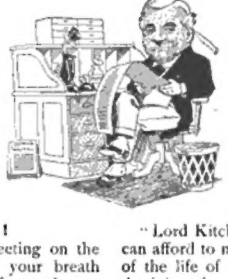
MR. EDITOR  —HIS PAGE.

BRAVO BELGIUM!

I DARESAY the cosmopolitan greeting on the back of the frontispiece took your breath away in some instances, but afterwards you saw—did you not?—at a glance that a special number in honour of our gallant allies, the Belgians, is the least tribute the ROYAL could pay to their magnificent fighting qualities. I should like you to read M. Camille Roussel's article carefully, for I am afraid we all know a great deal less about Belgium than we should do, and seeing that in this case to know is to admire, perhaps also we lack something of the admiration which Belgian deeds deserve.

If you have come to know any Belgian *emigrés* during the war, please pass on to them your copy of the ROYAL. They will, I hope, appreciate the compliment we intended when we made this a Belgian number, and chose a portrait of their gallant King for a cover design.

A FRENCH NUMBER.

The February ROYAL will be devoted to the French. I want you to make absolutely certain of getting a copy because a distinguished writer who knows France as few of us know England is contributing a special article dealing with the French as they really are, and not as the English imagine them to be. There is a vast difference, I assure you.

Moreover the French as they are do not altogether resemble the French as they were. A great change has come over France of recent years. English people for the most part fail to recognise this. That is why I want everyone to read the February ROYAL and realise the truth.

A BATCH OF WAR BOOKS.

We live in stirring days, and it is a little difficult to cope with the times, but it is possible to do so by keeping a wary eye open for the chief books dealing with current events and the principal actors in them.

"Lord Kitchener" is a book which no one can afford to miss, for it gives a vivid account of the life of the man who is controlling the destinies of our gallant army, and contains a foreword by Mr. T. P. O'Connor, M.P.

A work that should appeal specially to women is "An Englishwoman's Adventures in the German Lines," by Miss Gladys Lloyd, whose experience of the treatment meted out to the Belgian villagers by the Germans provides most thrilling reading.

"The Special Constable" is a volume which should be read by every special constable who takes his duties seriously, for it covers in a brief and interesting fashion the whole scope of his work.

The first war correspondent to return from the fighting line was Mr. Harold Ashton, who chronicles his experiences in a thrilling book entitled "First from the Front." It is a book which grips you from start to finish.

"CAN GERMANY WIN?"

is the title of a book written by an American, who both before and after the war enjoyed exceptional opportunities of learning the German point of view, and noting the resources and preparations of the people. A more arresting and interesting book could not be found.

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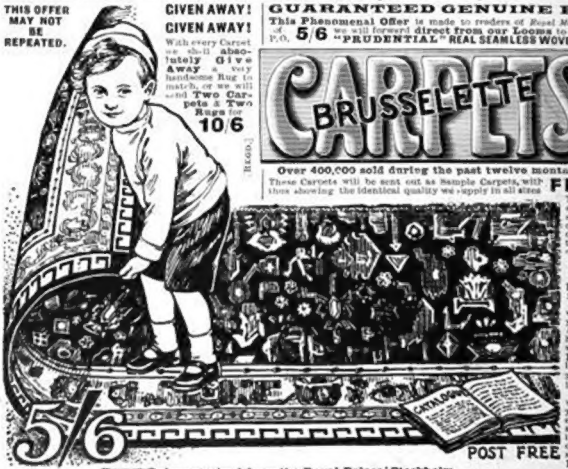

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